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THE FOOT TICKLER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Evelyn's Plot," "Darcy's Child," "One Sparkle of Gold," &c., &c.

CHAPTER VIII.

My lover's blood is on thy spear,
How canst thou ever bid me love thee?

THE soft, gray dawn of morning had lightened the skies of that fair, clear Italian atmosphere in which the blending shades of night and day are so gently mingled that it is difficult to pronounce where one ends and the other begins in the gradual and if it may be so called tasteful gradations between the darkness of the one and the brilliancy of the other.

Norma, the Italian-bred albeit not Italian-born, had slept a deep though not untroubled slumber, that was broken by what seemed a ghostly and scarcely perceptible sound in her luxurious apartments, albeit distinct enough to waken the young and lightly sleeping cantatrice from the oblivion of that insensibility to the bright reality of light and life which for the happy is but a new beginning of the joy and active energy of a fresh period of time, and to the afflicted and the sinful a new torture for mind and body.

Norma, the admired, the worshipped prima donna, the gifted beauty, ought surely to have been among the former favoured ones of Heaven's creatures. To her the returning day should have brought but the commencement of happy labours, the expectation of new triumphs.

But if the startled glances, the wild, questioning look round her sleeping chamber could have been accepted as a sign, the feelings of that envied beauty were aught but peaceful or gay at that gray and early dawn.

"Eustace," she murmured, "Eustace."

There was no reply.

She hastily lighted a taper and examined the apartment.

Eustace Villiers had vanished in the silence of the night.

As if by a magic instinct, the words that had

passed between him and Lord Grantley Neville flashed back on her mind. She pressed her brow violently with her small hands as if to still its throbbings and calm it for thought.

Motionless and transfixed she stood lost in thought for a few moments.

Then she rapidly began her toilet.

The simple costume that she usually wore as her ordinary morning attire was donned in an incredibly short space of time.

A large, cloak-like mantilla was wrapped round her slight form and drawn over her small head, round which the coils of her rich black hair were twined in classic grace.

Then, glancing hastily in the ante-room where her attendant slept, so as to make herself certain that her untimely exodus would not be noticed, she stole from the apartments and glided softly down the wide marble flight of stairs to the portal of the mansion.

Every avenue of that bright, fair city was familiar to her from long and early residence within its precincts. And with a swift, certain step she glided along its turnings and its silent streets and lanes, till she arrived at a spot which contained a lonely villa, embosomed in its own grounds.

She paused at the gate, crouched beneath the thick shrubs that surrounded it, with the supernatural acuteness that overwrought and feverish senses acquire, to watch and to listen. There was a light in the windows of the chateau, faint perhaps and uncertain, but still an undoubted and artificial light, betokening that some tenant of the mansion was awake and moving.

Then Norma could detect a sound, faint, scarcely audible, cautious, but still an undoubted sound in the distance.

There were steps, slow and noiseless, but still plain to her keen ears.

The next moment they approached the place of her concealment.

She could discern two figures and features that she knew full well, and she cowered down behind the friendly bushes as they passed.

In a few seconds they had vanished, and then the

girl slowly rose with a blanched face and stood gazing in the direction they had taken in blank uncertainty as to her own next course of action.

"You can scarcely be surprised to see me, Lord Neville," said Eustace Villiers, "even at this untimely hour. Your conduct was too grossly insulting to be passed unnoticed, and I shall scarcely be satisfied even with the apology you are, of course, prepared to offer."

Such had been the greeting which had roused Lord Neville on that early morn.

Grantley Neville was certainly dumbfounded at this sudden intrusion in his apartments, for albeit he had not yet thrown off his evening dress and retired to bed he was idly and half-unconsciously slumbering on the couch that stood in his large ante-chamber that served him for dressing and for sitting-room.

The door had opened noiselessly, and the slight noise that had roused him from his slumbers only served to open his astonished eyes on the figure of the handsome but mysterious Eustace Villiers.

He sprang up and instantaneously laid his hand on the small pocket pistol that lay near him—a fit precaution for that land of romance and brigandage and unrestrained crime.

"What the deuce does this mean?" he exclaimed as his senses regained their full power. "Do you mean to murder me?" he exclaimed, fiercely, "that you come in like a thief at this hour of the night?"

"Oh, no, by no means," returned Eustace, coolly. "No, I could easily have done it in your sleep with very slender chances of discovery. Look here," he added, drawing a small dagger from his dress. "This is more than an equivalent for that pretty 'barker' of yours, my lord. But I am no felon to commit such an atrocious crime, Lord Neville. I come as one gentleman to another to demand satisfaction for an insult—a gross and unpardonable insult to my honour."

Neville smiled tauntingly.

"I can scarcely see where it lies," he returned, adroitly springing up as he spoke from his couch, and with a sudden gesture seizing the polished weapon

from Villiers's incautious hand, and darting to the window he flung it among the shrubs beneath. "But now that we are speaking on more equal terms I am ready to listen and to give you satisfaction, so far as a gentleman can where he has some reason to believe that he is dealing with an equal, though that may be matter of opinion in this case, I confess."

Eustace turned white at this sudden and unlooked-for stroke of strategy, but he met it with one of his sardonic smiles that seemed to defy at once the implied taunt and the presumed helplessness of his position.

"I am not here to bandy words with a coward, my lord," he said, coldly. "For it is not cowardice that can shelter itself under such safeguards. And, what is more, I would advise you not to provoke or shower threats and insults upon one who laughs at such bravado. What brought me here is to demand at an hour when we are likely to be uninterrupted a full and ample apology on the terms I shall dictate for your insolent interference in my affairs—or else immediate and honourable satisfaction of another and more summary kind."

"Will you be so kind as to state the grounds of your complaint, Mr. Villiers?" added Grantley, coldly. The blood of his race was flaming within him now, when the first chill of a threatened assassination had passed away.

And grasping his own small but effective weapon of defence he stood confronting his adversary, awaiting his reply.

Eustace was perhaps rather gratified than the reverse at the sudden defiance of his adversary. He enjoyed dealing with one whom it was some honour to defeat and subdue.

"It is easily explained," he said. "May I ask on what pretence you have played spy on my movements and tattled some absurd gossip to a lady on whose privacy you intruded yourself while I was absent? Is not this sufficient to justify my present demand for satisfaction and redress, Lord Neville?"

"If you mean that what had accidentally come to my knowledge I was not at liberty to repeat to a lady whom I am bound to suppose is utterly unconnected with you, Mr. Villiers, I simply deny the charge, and decline any further intercourse with you. But if you can assert that there is any connection or relationship between you and the signorina then I may perhaps consider it in a different light."

He gazed sharply at Eustace as he spoke, with the evident impression that he had placed him as completely on the horns of a dilemma that it must result in the explanation of the apparent mystery that hung over the young signorina's life.

But he knew not the man with whom he had to deal.

Eustace never changed either tint or muscle of his face.

"It is perfectly irrelevant whether or not Signorina Norma is kindred of mine," he said, contemptuously. "It is not usual for these public favourites to be called to account as to private friendships. For my part you are perfectly welcome to your opinions or speculations, so long as you have the sense not to proceed in them to others, who may chance to have a little more sense and less prying idiosyncrasy of nature."

Lord Grantley's blood boiled at the scornful taunt. And the thought of Norma in her brilliant loveliness—her wild impetuosity, and as he believed her unprotected state—lashed him to fury against the cold-blooded, treacherous lover.

"I shall not be schooled by you, or any man, Mr. Villiers. I, at least, have some idea of what is due to woman's helplessness and her loveliness, and I will not willingly see them betrayed by a villain."

His hand was firmly fixed on the pistol he held as he spoke.

He had evidently distrust of his treacherous guest in that silent midnight hour.

But Eustace did not heed the gesture, save by a scornful smile.

"Very well," he said. "There can be but one alternative. My lord, I demand an instant and hostile meeting. There's plenty of quiet spots in the neighbourhood where we shall be undisturbed, and there is no time like the present."

"And without seconds? Nay, that would be simple murder!" exclaimed the young nobleman, with an involuntary shudder.

"By no means. I see no difference whether there are two or four at such affairs," was the cool rejoinder. "And at any rate it is equal for both. My lord, there is no alternative," he added, coolly.

"And if I refuse?"

"Then I shall brand you as a spy and a despicable villain before those who know you best, and whose opinions you value, and bring sufficient proof to convince them of the truth of my allegations. Besides, I may find means to forward your dearest wishes or ruin them for ever," he went on, significantly, "according to the results of this night's encounter."

"Then you are resolved whether I choose to consent or not," said Grantley, scornfully.

"I am. You cannot refuse—you dare not," was the reply. "Idiot, it would be simply death in its very worst form—death and dishonour—were you to defy me. Come—an hour will settle the business, and then—one of us will be free to indulge his fancies for good or ill."

It was a fiendish idea. The consciousness that two might go out, but that only one would return, was awful even to the bravest in that dark, quiet hour.

And though Grantley was no coward he could not restrain the very shills that ran through his every vein at the cold-blooded picture thus held up to his view.

Yet the strange power of that mysterious man was beginning to be felt—the spell was working already in his younger and more impassionate companion.

He felt as if some mesmerist hand was on him that could not be resisted without bringing a yet more fearful fate than that terrible conflict for life or death.

"It is insanity—murder!" muttered Grantley, rather to himself than his companion. "Well," he added, "well—it shall be so. I believe I am as good a shot as yourself. I can bring down a lark flying. But I will at least make one or two arrangements in case of the worst—a few brief lines that will not take many minutes to pen."

And he made a step towards a writing-table near him.

But Eustace coolly laid his hand on his arm.

"Pshaw," he said. "All this is but for cowards and old women. You have no wife or child to weep if you were to fail, nor such vast possessions as to signify to whom they may pass. The chances are that you will come off all right after this necessary ordeal. I am not bloodthirsty, my lord. We need not imitate the customs of the land and fight till death. Come, the minutes are flying. It will be moon, dangerous daylight before our little business is completed unless you are quick."

Grantley Neville was young, proud, impulsive. A younger son—early left an orphan, and with but a step-brother to see after his interests or his welfare—he had in truth but a very modest appurtenance to maintain his rank or indulge his tastes.

With the sort of careless desperation that was the consequence of such a position, and a latent idea that after all he might have the glory and the satisfaction of overcoming that strange, remarkable man who since his arrival in that thriving capital had gained a position and an influence rarely accorded to strangers in that exclusive capital, he quickly changed his thin attire for a dress more suitable for the morning hour and the fateful errand on which they were intent, and in a few minutes, wrapped in a large disguising cloak, and in a noiseless silence that well befitted the dark work, the two strangely assorted companions set off for their ominous and terrible destination.

Norma had scarcely dared to breathe as the unmistakable figure of him who was indeed the relentless master of her actions, the very idol of her worship, passed by her hiding-place.

The other figure was so enveloped in the massive cloak he wore that she could not have vouched for its identity, but she did not doubt the fearful suspicion which forced itself on her mind.

She gazed but too well the persons and their errand.

For a few moments that seemed like hours to her excited brain she paused in terrible suspense as to her own next course.

Should she alarm the inhabitants of the neighbouring cottages, or fly to the house itself to rouse the domestics for their master's protection?

But long ere it could be accomplished, long ere the alarm would be given, or the aid be effectual, the deed would be done, the crisis over, and even the very locality of the threatening conflict remain a mystery only to be solved by long search.

All this darted through the girl's brain like the flash of the fiery light which scorches the very land it illumines.

Hazardous as was the sole alternative she did not pause a useless second ere she adopted it. She gathered her mantilla round her, and, gliding from her hiding-place, she followed the direction that she had watched them pursue with the rapid lightness of a young fawn flying from a threatening foe.

But when she had gained the end of the avenue-like path which the two men had pursued a sharp winding turn baffled her pursuit. There were two wooded lanes either of which they might have taken to conduct them to a thick and secluded corner of a deserted vineyard, past which the girl had driven a few days since.

She stood in eager, despairing doubt as to which would conduct her to the fatal spot.

She had taken a few yards of one which she fancied bore the impress of recent pressure, when a low, muffled sound came on her ears from the opposite direction.

It was scarcely like a pistol shot, yet there was a fearful significance in the sound, and Norma fancied that she could hear a faint groan, so smothered that she could not be certain of its reality, feeling that it might be the heated creation of her own fancy.

But without waiting for another sound to guide her on her path she flew rather than ran along the distance she had to retrace, and in that opposite direction from which she knew the noise had come.

"Merciful Heaven! If I am too late!" she murmured as she passed between baffling, straggling branches and thickly planted shrubs which she did not pause to avoid in her impetuous eagerness.

Again the silence was broken by dim sounds as of rustling, hurried footsteps, which reassured the girl as to her course, and with renewed and desperate energy she passed on till she came to a small open space, surrounded by the tall poles of the vineyard, and so branched that it needed but a moment's survey to take in its whole surface.

For a moment she stood in blank disappointment. Not a trace of any human being was to be seen. But as she darted her quick glance over the brown and slippery grass she thought she could perceive a darker colour on its burnt-up surface, and, springing to the place, and kneeling down to be certain of the fact, she uttered a faint exclamation of horror.

The delicate fingers were crimsoned with wet and gory stains.

There was blood on that smooth, glassy ground, recently shed—human blood—as she instinctively knew.

But where was the victim?

Norma gazed fearfully round.

There was a crushed, battered figure appeared in the shrubs near the spot.

A moment's examination showed that the betraying stains were like a thick, red line towards that place.

The girl with her hands pressed on her beating heart, her lips white, her face flaming with two scarlet tell-tale flushes on the cheek bones, and when pale around, prepared to pursue her search.

In what would it lead? What terrible discovery awaited her burning eyes?

Was the man she so blindly worshipped a corpse or a murderer?

It was an investigation which might well blanch the strongest heart to pursue, but Norma pressed desperately, impetuously on for some twenty yards, and then, with a convulsive shudder, gave one bound like a lioness rushing to the encounter of her young.

There was a body, half concealed within the low thick plantation, but not so completely as to defy detection from one so frantically interested in its discovery as the young girl who sprang towards it.

Was it Eustace?

A second glance satisfied her on that point. The attire, so far as it was exposed to a passing view, was not his.

With a momentary sensation of relief the girl bent over the senseless form and began to examine its injuries and the probability of their fatal result.

Yet when the first irresistible thankfulness had passed away, like the very effervescence of Nature's boiling impulse, Norma shrank back with a low moan as the young and handsome features of the young noble who had so recently poured out the devotion of his whole soul at her feet met her view.

There he lay, pale, senseless, and rigid, the blue-veined lids closed over the full, laughing eyes, the bronzed hue of health drained from the pale skin, the livid lips, the active limbs, powerless and still in death or its semblance.

Norma moaned heavily.

"And this is his work—his work!" came from her lips. "And I, sinful that I am, have goaded him on to this fearful crime!"

It was the very collapse of despair and misery. Then she started from the trance as if by a galvanic shock, and bent closer down over the body.

"Grantley—Grantley, speak to me!" she exclaimed, "speak to Norma, to her whom you professed to love, to her who has killed you by her imprudent, selfish folly. Ah, in mercy live—live for my sake! He cannot be dead!—he shall not die!" she uttered, in a low, hoarse shriek, that sounded like a Banshee wail.

Was it heard, or was it the very fancy of delusion and passion?

Norma's breath was suspended as she bent close to the pale lips, and fancied that some faint inspiration and expiration could be detected between their rigid parting.

She hastily tore open the vest and put her ear to listen to the heart.

It was still—yet, no, a slight singular starting beat could be plainly heard at rare intervals of her quick senses.

Starting up, she thrust back her massive hair from her hot brow, as if to help her to think, to plan.

"He must—he shall be saved, if human power can avail," she murmured; "yet how? It must be

in secret—secret whether for good or for ill. Either he is true, and must be shielded—ay, and will love me better for my devotion—or he is false—and must be punished—ay, with a fearful, deep revenge. But how?—ay, that is the terrible doubt. It must be secretly and speedily. Heaven help me in this fearful strait!" she murmured, clasping her hands and closing her eyes as if to shut out surrounding objects and calm her distracted thoughts.

Then suddenly an inspiration appeared to seize her fevered brain.

She gave one more quick glance at the sufferer, bound up with her handkerchief the small orifice at the side of the temple from which the blood appeared to have flown. Then, springing away from the spot, in an opposite direction from that whence she had come, she darted along like the winged arrow on whose progress hangs the issues of fate.

CHAPTER II.

I wish I were within the bounds
Where he is smothered in his wounds;
Repeating, as he pants for air,
My name, whom once he called his fair,
No woman's yet so fiercely set,
But she'll forgive though not forget.

CELIA VYVIAN was sitting alone in the elegant boudoir that was her usual breakfast-room, where she generally remained till the second morning toilet was performed, after which she was visible to the world at large in all the adorned beauty that her tasteful attire might display, if not heighten to the very utmost.

But now she was wrapped in a mere *négligé* and her luxuriant hair loosely and negligently coiled round her well-shaped head or drooping in careless grace over her stately cheeks and shoulders.

In her hand was a letter which had arrived by the morning's post, and which had brought a pale sickness to her rich bloom and a contracted pain to her white brow that spoke of no common importance in its tidings.

It was brief and written on paper in a hand that did not seem to carry any such alarming omens in its aspect as appeared to have daunted that haughty, imperious spirit.

The paper was thick and glossy, as polite missives are usually penned on by well-bred fingers, and the writing itself had something bold and gentlemanlike in its character, which spoke of gentle education and no plebeian calling.

Yet Celia gazed on it as if it had been a writ or a harsh creditor's threat.

The expression of her face wore something of terror in it that scarcely corresponded with the gentler sorrows of bereavement and death.

"Coming," she muttered, hoarsely; "coming, and I on the very eve of all I desire most on earth. I thought he was dead. Oh, mercy, if it had been but true. If the ship had sunk which brought him back from that distant land; if he had fallen a prey to the pestilence that raged in it! Oh, what shall I do? How can it be averted? How close that taunting, venomous tongue—how satisfy that grasping avarice? Oh, what a fearful, desperate game I have to play, surrounded by false friends and secret foes. Yet, if I win, as I have hitherto won, it will be indeed a prize worth the struggle. Wealth, love, happiness—all will be gained when the penniless orphan has conquered all and reigns secure over Victor's heart and the broad lands of the Vyvians."

She swallowed a hot cup of coffee that stood before her to still the trembling which made even the hand which held the fatal letter relax its hold.

And then she rang a silver bell which stood by her, and in a moment a page appeared, clad in a peculiar style, that well suited his dark, Southern style of features.

A black velvet suit, with scarlet facings, and a sash fastened over the left shoulder like an order of merit with glittering silver brooch, in which a dark, curiously lurid stone was set, formed the costume of the heiress's favourite page, who many persons believed had some more romantic origin than a simple Spanish descent and English birth.

"Carlos," said Miss Vyvian, as she had stood motionless and expectant before her, "has any one inquired for me this morning?"

"No one, *senorina*," he replied, in a decidedly foreign accent, albeit the pronunciation was correct and pure.

Celia paused for a moment ere she spoke again.

"Carlos," she said, "I believe you can be trusted, I believe that you are faithful to me?"

"I have sworn it," he said; "and one of my race never breaks an oath or a pledged word."

"Then listen and carry out my orders to the letter, Carlos," she resumed. "A gentleman will call here for me—it may be to-day, this morning. Then when he leaves you will escort him to the very gates and do not lose sight of his movements. I would know all, everything about him and his proceedings, and silently, secretly—you understand?"

"I do, *senorina*."

"And you will obey?"

"To the letter, *senorina*."

"It is well, you shall be rewarded as you may deserve."

"I am repaid by your smile, by the words that sound kindly on my ear. I require naught else," said the youth, passionately, though his tone was repressed and deep.

"It is well. Keep all others away. Say I am ill, asleep, busy, but do not let any one disturb me till I give permission," returned the lady, with perhaps a tinge more coldness in her command. "Now take this tray and send Laura here instantly."

The lad disappeared with a return to his former statuesque manner, and Celia remained in a deep fit of troubled thought.

"There is something singular in that youth's manner and tone," she said, musingly. "Surely he does not dare, but, *pehew!* the thought is simply idiotic, I have too much to fear and to conquer just now without conjuring up such wild phantoms. Now for Louis Herries and his threats and demands. It is well he wrote. I am prepared for him, at least—"

The entrance of her maid interrupted the reverie, and for the next half-hour the enervated heiress was employed in the interesting cares of an elaborate toilet.

"Signorina, a gentleman requests an interview with you, he presents this card," said Carlos, approaching closer with a silver salver in his hand, which he bent on one knee to place before her with the kind of fantastic homage that he was wont always to display to his beautiful mistress.

Celia scarcely touched the delicate pasteboard whose impress was but too familiar to her as she said, coldly:

"Admit Mr. Herries, Carlos, and remember my orders."

In another minute a tall, thin individual wasted almost to haggardness, though without any actual appearance of ill health or feebleness came into the room. There was a free carelessness in his lounging gait, the stamp of dissipation and recklessness on his by no means ill-moulded features that strangely contrasted with the clerical garb he wore and the bland softness of his address.

"I have returned in a fortunate time, I find," he said, after extending a hand that Celia did not pretend to see. "It is charming to find that those who have the will are also endowed with means to carry out their generous impulses. Miss Vyvian, allow me to offer my warm and respectful congratulations at your most unlooked-for good fortune."

Celia's foot moved impatiently.

"Perhaps you ought scarcely to call it unlooked for," she said, haughtily. "I have but inherited the estates of my forefathers. But perhaps you would occupy your time more profitably in explaining your object in coming here, Mr. Herries. Your visit is unexpected, I may add, unwelcome on every account, especially at this juncture."

She strove hard to preserve a cold superiority of tone, but the imperious pride was but a constrained imitation of the haughty tone which she desired to display.

And the man she had to deal with was well able to pierce into the recesses of her dark and troubled spirit.

"Pardon me, Miss Vyvian. It seems to me that I have arrived at a most fortunate period for yourself and me," he returned, coolly. "It is very pleasant to find a friend whom one has seen in very troublous and adverse circumstances advanced to such prosperity and happiness. I hope you will be induced to open your heart under such sunny influences, and share the good fortune that has befallen you with those who have so much contributed to its advancement."

Celia drew herself haughtily back.

"I really do not understand you, Mr. Herries. If you refer to an extremely imprudent and girlish adventure, long years since, I have certainly more cause to blame than to thank you for any share you took in it. In any case you have been most amply repaid for what trouble you may have taken in the matter."

"But not for the secrecy that has enabled you to gain your present high position, Miss Vyvian," said the man, with the same peculiar emphasis on the words that he had before used. "Nor for the reticence that I shall have to maintain to enable you to preserve it. The greater the height the more giddy the head and dangerous the fall, you know, young lady. Not only do I hold the secret to which you allude in my keeping, but I have that to tell you that may altogether alter your feelings towards me in this matter. Pray have you heard lately of him—I mean of the other party to the little episode of which we spoke but now?"

Celia did wince now. Her eyes opened nervously and her lips were parted in an anxious, startled effort to speak what yet she did not seem to have courage to ask.

"What—whom do you mean?" she asked, in forced calmness.

Herries laughed scornfully as he replied:

"Cease, cease. This is really only trifling and a loss of time that may be more valuable to you than me, for you know well enough to whom I allude. I know where he is and what he is about to try for. He plays a high game like yourself, but still something else would suit his book better than the matter he has in hand. I should sorely advise you to risk the chances."

She was white and quivering now.

"Man, you are trifling with—imposing on me," she faltered. "The person you speak of disappeared long since—he is, I believe, dead. Of course it is easy to attempt such a fraud, but I am not so easily imposed upon. And," she continued, "were it so, the proofs are gone—were destroyed years since, and it is so long—so very long ago. It is a mere tale to extract money; but I defy such falsehoods," she added, gaining courage, as it seemed, as she went on.

"It is truth, and you know it," said Herries, sternly. "I see it in your eyes—your white cheeks—your trembling lips. Simpleton, to suppose I could be thus repulsed when I have you and yours in my power. I tell you I have only to go to the person who shall be nameless, and tell him of the change of your fortunes, and the intended change of name of one he formerly knew under extremely different auspices, and he would willingly purchase the knowledge at a far higher price than I am about to demand of you. Be advised, and, in spite of all this idle flourish, come at once to terms, and close this conference, which is perhaps not over safe for you, whatever it may be for me."

"And you—you profess to be a clergyman—you wear its garb, you have taken its vows," she gasped, with pitiable attempt at severe reproach.

"It matters not; I have received but poor return for any service I may have rendered to Mother Church," said the man, with a mixture of cynical bitterness and of reproach. "She has been but a cold and unloving step-parent to me. No wonder if I break her bonds and leave her barren bosom. In any case you may as well leave me and my conscience to settle that matter. It appears to me that you have quite sufficient on your own, Miss Celia. But I do not meddle with your little ideas on that head. I only want proper remuneration—a share in the good things you have gathered round you."

Again the masculine, powerful nature gained and asserted its mastery over even that haughty girl, and the next words were a tacit confession of the submission.

"I might certainly be inclined to yield something to prevent annoyance and trouble," she said. "Of course I know as well as yourself that it is very easy to spread scandal, which stains a fair name, and may produce great if temporary misery. What do you require?"

"You have come into ten thousand per annum, and you are about to marry the man you love—so runs the tale! Is it true or false?" he asked.

She bowed her head in assent.

"Then to save the spotless name of which you speak, and the happiness of such a love-match, it will not be too much to give me a guerdon at your wedding of a thousand pounds, and then an annuity of as much a year afterwards."

Celia literally bounded from her chair.

"You are mad!" she said. "As if I could even dream of assenting to such a grasping imposture. Herries, I could not—it would not be in my power. Only imagine—Mr. Merdant must in such a case discover all, he must wonder where the money could go. The money at once I might manage, but the other—no, no—it is simply impossible."

"It must be managed," said the man, coolly.

"Harkye, Miss Vyvian, you are not so devoid of resources as you would make believe. Nothing is easier than deception. Why not tell your husband that the annuity is granted to an old friend of your father's to whom you owe much in other days?" he added, deliberately. "That would be about the case—is it not so, young lady?—and would surely satisfy one to whom you are taking so rich a dower."

Celia's eyes were bent on the ground.

She was evidently in deep and earnest thought.

"Give me time," she said. "Yes—in all probability it will be managed as you wish. But I cannot make such a weighty promise without consideration. To-morrow you shall hear from me if you give me an address. I can send by a messenger who will be trustworthy and discreet."

Mr. Herries took a long breath that ended in a severe cough of extraordinary violence.

But when he had cleared his throat he replied, with tolerable graciousness:

"The request is not altogether unreasonable, though it can scarcely be a matter of question what you must do. However, here is the place where a letter will reach me, and if you send about this time to-morrow I will make a point of receiving it in person for greater security. Now I need not detain

you longer, Miss Vyvian. Really," he added as he rose to depart, "you are handsomer than ever, though you must be near the shady side of twenty-five, and ought to look out for squalls. I wouldn't advise you to risk being rejected on account of my personal charge on you, Miss Ceila. I rather expect you would find yourself more attractive in one quarter than you might wish—a very rare thing for a woman."

He held out his hand in farewell.

She barely touched it with her cold fingers and then rang her bell with violence.

"Carlos, attend this gentleman to the gates—you can take him through my own entrance and private garden."

Then as the two disappeared she flung herself despairingly on the cushions of the couch.

"Ah, if he were dead—if he were dead!" she muttered when the first passion of tears was over.

She was roused by a slight noise near her.

It was Carlos, the page, who had entered, unobserved.

(To be continued.)

DRYING AND COLOURING NATURAL FLOWERS.

WHEN blue or violet flowers are exposed to the smoke of a lighted pipe or cigar a very surprising change of colour takes place, the flowers becoming a magnificent green resembling Schweinfurt green, without any injury being done to the form of the flowers; and the deeper the original colour the darker is the green. Candy-tuft (*Iberis umbellata*) and night violet (*Hesperis matronalis*) take an especially beautiful colour. This phenomenon is caused by the small quantity of ammonia present in tobacco smoke, which converts blue and violet into green in the same manner as solutions of the alkalies do. The smoke blown from the mouth will not produce the same effect, because the ammonia is absorbed by the saliva of the mouth. Unfortunately this beautiful appearance does not last long; the flowers which have been exposed to the slightly increased temperature of the burning cigar wilt and become of a dirty yellowish brown colour.

The experiment is much more satisfactory when weak ammoniacal gas is used. To do this, insert the flower in the tube of a glass funnel in such a manner that the rim of the funnel projects an inch above the flower. A few drops of ammonia are dropped on a plate, and the funnel containing the flower is inverted over it; in a few minutes the most beautiful change of colour takes place. Nearly all blue, violet, and light carmine flowers are changed to a magnificent Schweinfurt green. Dark carmine red pinks are coloured black, the carmine flowers of *Lichniscoronata* become dark violet, while all white flowers turn sulphur-yellow. Variegated flowers show the most striking changes of colour, the white petals turning yellow, and the red petals on the same flowers green.

If red fuchsias with white calices are treated with ammonia, the calix becomes yellow, and the red part green and blue. After the change of colour has taken place put the flowers at once into fresh water, and they will retain their beautiful colours from two to four hours, according to the amount of ammonia taken up. Gradually, however, their former colours return, the green leaves passing through blue to the original colour, without wilting. Lovers of flowers can in this way produce, as it were by magic, a flora which does not exist in Nature.

If the ammonia be allowed to act on the flowers for one or two hours, they acquire a permanent dirty chamois colour, without wilting or losing shape, even when dried. Asters, which have no odour, acquire a sweet, aromatic odour as soon as saturated with ammonia.

To give blue, violet, or red asters a beautiful red colour, so that they can be dried to be used in winter for wreaths, it has heretofore been customary to immerse them in, or sprinkle them with, dilute nitric acid. This method did not produce very perfect flowers, because the wax in the petals of the flower prevented the acid attacking them equally. This produces irregularity in colour, and when dry the form of the flower is also irregular, so that many of them are wasted, being unfit for use. These disadvantages are overcome by using hydrochloric acid vapours. Any wooden box can be used for the purpose. The box should first be provided with strings on which to hang the asters, and a piece of glass inserted on opposite sides of the box to watch the change of colour. Then suspend the asters by pairs or double pairs, with the stems tied together, and in such a manner that the flowers hang down. On the bottom of the box are placed one or two plates of ordinary hydrochloric acid, according to the size of the box and number of flowers, and the box is closed. Small flowers are evenly coloured in two hours, larger

ones require four to six hours' exposure to the acid. Red and blue asters become carmine red without injury to their form. It is necessary to examine the box from time to time, and to remove the flowers as soon as the change of colour is completed.

After being removed from the box the flowers are suspended in a similar manner in an airy but shaded room to dry. When dry they are preserved in a dark dry place.

TO CYNTHIA. A SAILOR'S SONG.

MOON of midnight, darkly hiding
Half thy beauties in a cloud!
Hear a suppliant, gently chiding,
Low before thine altar bowed.
Say! what offering shall entice thee
From thy convent walls again?
Will a simple song suffice thee,
Goddess of the gentle reign?
Or, if issuing from thy portal
Thou hast aught of doubtful fear,
I am but a lowly mortal,
Thou a goddess, lend thine ear!
Twice when Stygian darkness doubled
All the terrors of the sea,
And our souls were sorely troubled,
Thou hast been a friend to me.
Once when linked in rage together
High the winds and waters ran,
And upon our dark'ning weather
Drove the reckless Chinaman.
And again when swiftly nearing,
Full of hope, our promised goal,
Thou, above a cloud-rift peering,
Near revealed the hidden shoal.
Nor alone when danger struck our
Hearts with fears that hourly grew,
Goddess, for thy timely succour
Would I yield thee worship due;
But when bright thy dear reflections
Lit the dreary, distant sea,
Ah! the home-born recollections
Nightly they have brought to me!
Memories of the golden May-time,
When thy beauteous fairy shield,
Bright as primal beams of daytime,
Silvered over stream and field,
And in many a silver shiver
Pierced the gloomy woodland hear,
Till their faint, exhausted quiver
Rested on a cottage door.
Ah! what shame, or deep contrition,
Keeps thee in thy cloister now?
Dost thou hear my low petition,
Virgin of the pallid brow?
Now when winds and passions bluster,
And our souls are faint for light,
Why withhold thy wonted lustre?
Why thy favoured beam to-night?
Take this little, gentle planet!
Though thy deep deserts of yore
Well demand a worthier than it,
Grateful, I can give no more.

J. H. M.

SCIENCE.

EFFECT OF DIFFERENT COLOURED LIGHT UPON THE AMOUNT OF CARBONIC ACID GAS IN RESPIRATION.—Two Italian investigators, Selmi and Piacentini, have instituted an interesting series of experiments to determine whether different colours affected the respiration of animals as they are known to affect plants. The animal to be experimented upon was placed in an air-tight box into which no light could penetrate except such as passed through glass of a given colour. Air freed of carbonic acid was constantly admitted into the box, and escaped by a second opening, where it was passed through a vessel which contained some absorbent of carbonic acid, so that its amount could be accurately determined. Representing the quantity of carbonic acid respired by a dog in a given time under white glass by 100, the amount given off under black glass was 82.07, under violet 87.73, under red 92, under blue 103.77, under green 106.03, and under yellow 126.83. The difference was still greater when the experiment was tried on a pigeon and on a hen. The authors came to the conclusion that green and yellow rays, which are the most important to the vegetable kingdom in taking up carbonic acid, are also most favourable to the respiration of animals, that is, enable them to give off the most carbonic acid. Previous investigators have reported in favour of blue glass, so that the question is not yet fully settled.

EXPERIMENTS WITH DISINFECTANTS.

As the result of a series of experiments with disinfectants, Herr Eckstein, of Vienna, recommends chloride of lime as the cheapest and best. Bleaching powders rapidly decompose all hydrogen compounds such as ammonia, sulphuretted hydrogen, sulphide of ammonium, phosphoretted hydrogen; and these are the gases which occasion miasma. It acts rapidly by liberating oxygen, and its chlorine violently decomposes organic matter. At the same time bleaching powders are a cheap commercial article, and hence always accessible. In order to avoid the inconvenience often resulting from the liberated chlorine the ingenious device has been tried of enclosing the bleaching powders in a bag made of parchment paper. This bag remains quietly where it is placed, and by the principle of endosmosis and exosmosis, the full effect of the liberated chlorine is attained without any inconvenience to the occupants of the house.

Herr Eckstein made comparative experiments with different disinfectants for two years with the following results:

1. Two pounds of sulphate of iron dissolved in water and poured into a saucer at first liberated sulphuretted hydrogen, and after twelve hours no longer produced any effect.
2. A solution of sulphate of copper behaved in the same way.
3. Two pounds of crystals of green vitriol retained its action for two days.
4. A mixture of sulphates of iron and copper and carbolic acid lasted two days.
5. Sulphurous acid was suffocating, and ceased to act in one day.
6. Carbolic acid produced a worse smell in the house than the bad gases of the sewer.
7. Two pounds of sulphate of iron in a parchment bag retained its valuable property longer than when exposed free.
8. Two pounds chloride of lime in a parchment bag continued to purify the air for nine days.
9. Permanganate of soda was successful as long as it lasted, but is too expensive.

Enclosing chloride of lime in a parchment bag and suspending it in an outhouse or leaving it in a sewer is recommended by the experimenter as the best disinfectant to be obtained in the market.

PROPERTIES AND USES OF KIESERITE.

KIESERITE is a mineral composed of sulphate of magnesia and water, which occurs to the extent of 12 per cent. in the salt deposits of Stassfurt, Germany. It differs from Epsom salts by its difficult solubility in water and smaller percentage of water of crystallization.

The first attempts to economize kieserite were made in 1864, when it was proposed to employ it in the preparation of sulphate of potash. Since that time the applications have greatly increased, and it has now become an important article of commerce. The largest quantity of the raw material is brought to England, where it takes the place of the sulphate of magnesia, formerly manufactured from dolomite, or Grecian magnesite, in cotton printing. Another portion of kieserite is converted into Glauber salts, which, on account of its freedom from iron, is highly prized by glass manufacturers.

Manufacturers of *blanc fixe* employ kieserite instead of sulphuric acid to precipitate the sulphate of barium from chloride of barium, and in all similar cases where it is proposed to prepare a difficultly soluble sulphate the kieserite can be advantageously used. Kieserite is recommended as a substitute for gypsum in agriculture as a top dressing for clover, and is largely employed in England for this purpose. It is proposed to use kieserite in the manufacture of alum. There is a mineral called bauxite which chiefly consists of the hydrated oxide of aluminium; this is easily dissolved in hydrochloric acid. Cheap potash salts and the calculated quantity of kieserite are added; alum crystallizes out of the solution, and chloride of magnesium remains in the mother liquor.

The uses indicated above are wholly inadequate to consume the enormous quantities now obtained from the Stassfurt mines. Millions of pounds of kieserite are annually brought to the surface, and it is becoming a serious question to know what to do with it. If it could be used as a substitute for gypsum in building materials and cements its cheapness would at once commend it to notice. Experiments looking to this application have been tried.

Two equivalents of kieserite and one equivalent of caustic lime were stirred to a paste in water. The mass hardened but remained granular and brittle. On calcining it, however, again pulverizing and moistening with water, it set to a solid, marble-like mass, which could be applied to many useful purposes. It is proposed to employ this material for ornamental decorations in the interior of houses and in general for the manufacture of cements and as a substitute for plaster of Paris.



[A RACE FOR LIFE.]

THE GOLDEN LURE.

CHAPTER VI.

It it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly. *Shakespeare.*

INGERSOL received the lawyer's announcement with but seeming calmness. The heiress was on her way over—only a short interval remained between himself and the time when she would occupy Marshmellow Hall, and he be a penniless adventurer, preying upon society like a hungry shark after the blood of the ill-fated sailor.

From morning until night but one thought occupied his mind, and that was how to rid himself of Jane Brent.

The "Fire Fly" was now expected daily in port, and there was but one thing left him to do. He supplied himself with money, and, procuring a suit of dark, shabby-looking clothes, started for the coast.

He would hunt Jane Brent down—hunt her down to death. He would slay her, as he would a dog that stood in his path. Dykham should do it for him—Dykham, the great, burly ruffian who had served him many a time before, and who, with his ill-got gains, kept an inn of more than questionable repute on the coast.

Dykham would do anything for money, and he would pay him well.

It was night when he reached there, and a terrible storm that for two nights and a day had raged with undiminished fury was gradually dying away.

He found the innkeeper and his wife, with a host of others, down upon the beach, straining their eyes seaward, where a ship, securely held upon a reef some distance from the shore, was becoming wrapped in flames.

Over the seething foam of the waters the minute gun sent out a heavy, booming sound—a terrible appeal for succour in the hour of need; but there, in all that crowd of daring men, were none so reckless as to attempt to launch a boat and contend with the angry elements.

Again and again the gun sent up its wall of distress, and fishermen's wives in their pity went down upon their knees on the sands, praying for the unfortunate souls who were beyond all human aid or succour.

Suddenly a bright glare lit up the inky heavens, and a shriek of piercing agony rose high above the roar of the sea. The ship became one sheet of fire, and the death-cry of a hundred souls was stifled for ever.

But in that one flash of fiery splendour the name

of the ill-fated vessel had gleamed sharp and clear from the prow, and with an involuntary thrill Ingersol discovered it to be the "Fire Fly."

"She is dead now," said he. "I shall no longer need to fret myself on that point. She is out of my way, and the hundred thousand pounds are mine!"

He strolled exultantly up the beach. A party of fisherwomen were gathered around a dark, limp object on the ground. Ingersol went up to them, more out of idle curiosity than anything else, and asked what they were doing.

"It's a lady, sir, and she's coming to," was the reply, given in a whisper.

"A lady, eh?"

Ingersol pricked up his ears. What if after all the united efforts of the fire and water Jane Brent was still alive?

Signalling the innkeeper's wife, who was one of the company, he begged as an especial favour that the young woman should be taken speedily to her house, and he would see that she was well paid for her trouble.

Mrs. Dykham knew him instantly, in spite of his shabby clothes.

"La me, Mr. Ernest, is that you?" she cried. "Of course if you're willing to foot the bill, I'll take the best of care of her."

With the assistance of the women she carried the dripping girl to the inn and laid her on a couch, where ere long she was restored to sensibility.

As they attempted to remove her heavy dress they found tightly strapped around her waist a firm elastic belt, to which was attached a brass-bound ebony box.

The instant Mrs. Dykham touched the box the girl raised herself up in bed, looking wildly around.

"You must not touch that!" she cried, in an agitated tone. "That box holds all my fortune, and must be left alone."

The eyes of the innkeeper's wife glittered greedily. Gold was her idol—the object of her passionate adoration, and, if the tiny casket contained a fortune, that fortune she would have by fair means or foul.

She went to her husband, who was conversing in a low tone with Ingersol.

Shortly afterward Jane, who had now quite recovered, and her clothes having been dried, rejoined the others in the public room.

While there the door opened and a couple of men came in.

Their faces were pale and wan, and their clothes were completely saturated with water. They called for hot drinks and a couple of beds.

The girl started quickly as their voices sounded

through the room, and she went slowly towards them, extending a hand to each.

Ingersol was watching her movements, and strained his ears to catch the words she was saying.

"Is it possible, gentlemen, that I see you again? It is pleasant to know that I am not the only survivor of this terrible shipwreck."

The eyes of the gentlemen brightened at sight of her.

"Miss Brent!" cried the captain, for it was he, shaking her hand warily. "By Jove! I'm glad to hail you again this side of eternity."

"I am beginning to think I lead a charmed life, Captain Blane. I have thought several times that I had looked my last on earthly things, but only awoke to find myself still in the flesh."

She sat down by the glowing fire, her clear, well-cut features sharply defined against the dark background, for, save the flickering rays on the hearth, there was no light in the room.

Ingersol stood back in the shadow, intently watching. The clear tones of Captain Blane, as he uttered her name, had not failed to reach his ear, and his suspicions were now verified.

He was rapidly revolving in his mind what to do. There were now three to dispose of in place of the one—Captain Blane, his mate, and Jane Brent.

If Captain Blane and his comrade went on their way unmolested, they would report to Adam Brownell that she survived the shipwreck and still lived.

It was a lonely inn on the coast, seldom frequented, and of those who had chanced to put up there very few had gone away.

No one knew of these three souls, save less than half a dozen fisherwomen, who would return to their homes now the storm was done, and never come again unless they were sent for.

It would be an easy thing to do.

He would give the innkeeper a magnificent sum of money for the one night's work, and then all his trouble would be over.

"Dykham Inn" could hold three more graves as well as the many who were already hidden in the damp cellars.

From his shadowed look-out Ingersol kept a sharp, vindictive watch on the trio before the blazing fire.

He listened for the low tones of the young lady, and, with a fiendish gleam, thought of the rapidly approaching time when that calm voice would be forever stilled and the grave-worms fatten on the round and graceful form.

How he hated her as he watched the firelight playing on her pure, high-bred face.

He hated her for being the rightful owner of what he was determined to have for himself.

And she, all unconscious of the presence of her deadliest enemy, talked calmly on.

Finally the captain rose, glancing at the clock.

"I fear you must be weary, Miss Brent, and if the host will kindly show us to our room we will bid you a good-night," he said, with a parting clasp of the hand. "I am very tired myself, and think a good sleep will be beneficial to me."

Dykham stepped along toward the captain and lighting a spluttering candle told him he was ready.

The two men followed him up the long flight of stairs and entered the room indicated. Drawing off their heavy boots, they flung themselves down on the separate beds, and a few minutes later their deep, regular breathing showed them to be in a heavy slumber.

After returning to the room upstairs Jane sat by the fire, thinking of what she should do. She determined to write to Adam Brownell and trust herself to remain at the inn until she heard from him, which she fancied would be ere long.

Then too she must write immediately to Doctor Evlin, and let him know of her safety, as he would undoubtedly hear of the loss of the "Fire Fly."

Despite her late exposure and peril she felt not the least inclination to sleep, but thinking it best to lie down she unfastened her clothes and sought the couch.

The night wore on and the hand on the dial pointed to two o'clock. Jane still lay on the couch, but an oppressive fear was on her and she could not sleep. Finally she arose and sat down in the gloomy embrasure of the window, the heavy curtain falling over her. She saw a light flash through the keyhole and heard faint footsteps on the stairs, but she did not heed them. An unconquerable terror chained her to her seat and she felt herself unable to move.

Captain Blane slept uneasily. He occupied a recess that was only separated from the mate's apartment by a heavy chintz curtain that fell from ceiling to floor. Twice he fancied he heard his name called, but he was half asleep and the voice sounded faint and far away. Then he tried, half unconsciously, to listen, but there was no sound save the roar of the ocean and the wind moaning through the crannies of the old inn. His tired head sought the pillow again and he fell into a deep and dreamless sleep.

Then there was a calm for an instant, a solemn, weird stillness seemed to settle over the house, which was broken suddenly by a loud and terrible cry as of one in mortal agony.

This time there could be no mistake. Half bewildered Captain Blane pushed back the heavy curtain and looked anxiously out.

A horrible sight met his astonished eyes.

The room was dark, save a feeble light emitted from the candle that spluttered fitfully in the socket, but by its faint rays he beheld the mutilated body of the mate being borne out to the passage-way in the arms of the villainous innkeeper.

On they went, the blood leaving a crimson trail through the hall, until they finally disappeared down the narrow iron stairs that led to the vaults beneath. Here the innkeeper paused.

Throwing the lifeless form on the damp earth, he dug a grave in one corner of the cellar, and, with the assistance of his wife, the dead man was thrown into it and the earth heaped up over him.

As the last shovelful of dirt fell with a dull thud on the grave a deep groan broke the solemn stillness. The guilty couple exchanged glances.

"'Tis his spirit," whispered the woman, her lips white with fear.

"More likely it's the wind," muttered Dykham, making haste to leave the cellar.

Both were superstitious, and, fearful lest she should be the last one to climb the iron stairs, the woman rushed ahead, forgetting in her mad haste the tin lamp, that stood on the floor, still burning, and ascended the steps at a break-neck speed.

Neither one rested until the heavy trap-door was securely shut, then they eyed each other fearfully.

The man was the first to recover himself.

"Come along, old woman," he cried, fiercely, "dead men tell no tales, and we may as well finish up the business and make a clean job of it at once. No falling back, now, I say."

They went slowly up the long staircase, and as they reached the chamber door paused to listen.

All was still.

Dykham turned the knob gently.

The door swung slowly open, and, with bated breath, the murderer and murderess entered.

Captain Blane's heavy boots stood at the foot of the bedstead, and his hat lay on a chair, but the bed was unoccupied, and, save themselves, the room was empty.

The bird had flown!

With a terrible cry the burly innkeeper sprang upon

the couch, calling loudly for his victim to come forth from his hiding-place.

But there was no sound save the echo of his own voice as it reverberated through the empty corridors.

"He has overheard us and escaped," muttered the terror-stricken woman, her face looking ghastly in the dim rays of the candle, which but partially illuminated the apartment.

Dykham strode slowly round the room.

"He cannot have gone far, for here are his hat and boots. We must search the house and grounds. If he is really beyond our reach we must make our escape as quickly as possible. The authorities already have their eyes on us, and this, if discovered, will finish the business."

The innkeeper looked under the bed, round the room, and down the hall, but found nothing.

Then he lighted a fresh lamp and searched the house thoroughly, but there was no trace of the missing man.

From the house the innkeeper went direct to the stables.

Half expecting to see his intended victim, he raised the curtain of the coach that was the only vehicle there, and, turning the full blaze of the lantern upon it, peered anxiously in.

But it was unoccupied.

With a muttered imprecation he dropped the curtain, and, harnessing the horses, returned to the house.

His wife was waiting for him at the door.

"It is of no use," he cried, angrily, in answer to her inquiries; "he has got away. To-morrow, maybe sooner, the sheriff and all the hounds of the law will be upon us, and escape then will be impossible. The storm has died away and we can go to-night. Collect all your valuables and clothing and put them in the coach. I'll see Ingersol and settle this affair somehow. Anyway I don't propose to have my neck stretched on his account."

Ingersol came along up the walk as he finished, just in time to overhear the conclusion of the speech.

"What about neck-stretching?" he asked, sharply, passing in his walk and confronting the innkeeper.

Dykham laughed sardonically.

"I mean that one of your coves lies dead in the cellar, and the other—"

He paused.

"Well, what of the other?" cried Ingersol, fiercely. "The other one has got away; and if I don't want my neck stretched I shall have to ship off, deuced quick too."

Ingersol stamped the earth in impotent rage.

"Escaped! Just my luck always. But the girl, Jane Brent, what have you done with her?"

"Nothing. We've had no time."

Again Ingersol poured forth a volley of invectives. "You may storm, Ingersol, but I'll not permit my life to be sent to perdition any more than you want pat out of your way. Pay me half the sum we agreed upon and I'll leave you in twenty minutes. Refuse to pay it and I'll shoot you where you stand."

Dykham drew a revolver and pointed it straight at his villainous employer.

Ingersol quailed before him.

"Put up your pistol, Dykham. I haven't refused to pay your charge yet, nor thought of doing so. Here is my purse, it contains two hundred pounds. Take it and I will give you a cheque for more."

Dykham lowered his revolver.

"Now then you talk like a man of sense. I'll see what I can do for you, providing you pay well enough—but it will take money and plenty of it."

Ingersol caught at his words.

"I will pay you a thousand pounds in gold to make way with Jane Brent. Think of that, man: You will be rich."

He forgot his usual caution in his excitement, and his voice sounded sharp and clear on the still air.

A lonely figure, shrouded in sombre garments and secretly hidden in the thick folds of the window curtain, was peering cautiously from the casement above his head.

"Yes," he continued, still in his loud tone, "two thousand pounds if you will undertake it and finish it up well, leaving no trace of her behind."

Dykham was thinking.

"I'll take your offer, Ingersol; but I must finish her in my own way and have my own time. It cannot be done to-night, for morning is most here and we must be gone. But we can force her to go with us, and in some lonely pass she can be thrown out to feed the crows."

"As you think best—I shall be content."

Dykham turned to enter the house, and Ingersol walked off down by the sea.

But the lonely watcher in the window had heard the nefarious plot, and a sickening sensation came over her as she listened. Trembling for support she leaned wearily against the wall.

"I may escape," thought she. "The officers, they

think, will be here to-morrow. I will leave a note in this crevice that shall guide them to me, or cause them to search for me throughout the kingdom."

With trembling fingers she undid the brass-bound box, and, taking pencil and paper, in a trembling hand wrote as follows:

"Inn-on-coast:—To whom it may concern:—Be it known that Captain Blane, the mate and Jane Brent, of the wrecked ship 'Fire Fly,' were cast upon this beach on the night of the nineteenth of November; that Captain Blane, the mate, and Jane Brent were brought to this house, where one of the men was murdered and buried in the vaults."

"Moreover, be it known that I, Jane Brent, am about to be removed against my will to some remote place, there to meet my death at the instigation of the man Ingersol. I beseech you, whoever this scrap of parchment reaches, to come to my assistance speedily; and may Heaven have mercy on me until then."

"JANE BRENT."

"Passenger by the ship 'Fire Fly.'"

Looking the box hastily, she slipped it in the folds of her dress.

Footsteps were approaching and a lamp shone brightly through the crevice in the door.

She knew she could not escape, but as the peril grew more imminent her spirit rose aloof and powerful to withstand it.

"I will meet my fate bravely," she said, wrapping her cloak around her and sitting down on the sill pale as a ghost, but calm. "I will not fight and struggle, but save my strength."

The door opened widely and the innkeeper's wife looked in.

She seemed surprised to see Jane sitting up, already dressed.

"Not asleep, I see?"

"No."

Her voice sounded loud and unnatural, and she spoke with an effort.

Mrs. Dykham suspected that Jane Brent was aware of their secret.

A hangman's rope danced before her vision for an instant, then she recovered herself.

She went up to Jane insolently and laid her hand heavily on her shoulder.

"Look here, young woman, I see you know what we have been about, but don't you dare to peach. We're going to leave now, my old man and me, and you'll go with us. So come on, the coach is waiting and we must be off."

She looked furtively around for a place to secrete her note, and espied a small stone ledge jutting out near the window.

It was the very thing.

"I will come, ma'am, as soon as I get my dress arranged," said she, snatching off the hand from her shoulder, and, turning round, pretending to fasten the robe.

Watching her opportunity, she slipped the brass-bound box from her pocket, and, placing the note on the lid, set it on the stone ledge.

"I will leave the box here," she whispered to herself, "it will be safer here on this ledge than it will be with me. If I escape I can come and get it back again, while, even though I am not killed, if I keep the box Ingersol will get it from me, and destroy the papers."

She placed it back on the shelf, and started towards the door.

The landlady strode after her.

"Not so fast, miss; you can't get away, and don't try, for you will get hurt if you do."

Jane slackened her pace, and allowed the woman to keep up with her.

The coach was standing at the door, and pushing Jane into it the innkeeper fastened the heavy curtains down, and nailing up the house clattered on to the vehicle and drove away.

Ingersol watched them go, and when the rumble of the wheels was lost to his ears he slouched his hat down over his eyes, pulled up his coat collar, and with long, swinging strides started for the nearest railway station.

On the evening of the next day he had the pleasure of handing the lawyer a paper containing a printed announcement of the burning of the "Fire Fly" and the total loss of all on board.

"Not a soul saved," said Ingersol, with a hypocritical sigh, slipping the paper into his pocket after Brownell had finished perusing it.

"And the hearse of the hundred thousand pounds is lost at last," said the lawyer, in a sad tone.

As they rounded the hillside the woman looked back and took a farewell glance at the house that so long had been her home. With a sudden shudder she thought of the stark, ghastly body down in the damp vault beneath the heavy flagstone.

Dykham looked at his wife and noticed her backward glance with a grim laugh.

"It will be many a long day ere we return to that shell," said he, with a chuckle. "With all the money we now have we can live as we please in some distant place or quiet inland town where no one we have ever known will come to disturb us."

"But the girl?"

Jane's listening ears barely caught the ruffian's brutal though guarded reply:

"We'll pitch her overboard when we come to a river."

The coach rattled on over bridges and through narrow gorges, halting for nothing till they found themselves many miles from the scenes of the previous night's tragedy.

Jane Brent discovered that her time was come, and the heart of the lonely prisoner grew faint as she saw no chance to escape the dreadful doom fate evidently had in store for her.

It was in a lonely gorge, through which rushed a seething body of sullen-sounding water; and the great gnarled trees towered closely over the steep sides, their heavy boughs shutting out both light and air.

Here the innkeeper had decided was a fitting place to accomplish his murderous purpose.

The carriage suddenly halted, and the gruff voice of Dykham ordered Jane to get out. As she did not immediately obey Dykham sprang into the coach and seized her long garments, jerking her rudely to the earth.

As she felt the rustle of the leaves under her feet a desperate resolve fired her soul.

"Say your prayers, young woman, pretty quick, for I intend to let daylight through that heart of yours in just half a minute," said Dykham, with a fiendish laugh.

She turned towards him, her pallid face gleaming strangely white in the dim morning light.

"If I am to die," she said, in a hushed, unwavering tone, "you must allow me to commend myself to Heaven untrammelled and unpolluted by your touch. Remove your hand from my shoulder, that I may be free, and kneel to Heaven."

The innkeeper shrugged his shoulders, removed his hand, and, cocking a pistol, pointed it at his victim. She saw it with a glance of pale despair.

"Nay," cried she, with a helpless gesture, "I cannot pray with your cruel eyes upon me. Can you not leave me five minutes to myself? I cannot escape."

He lowered the revolver, and turning his head winked at his wife, who, with white lips, was watching the horrible scene.

Jane saw his averted gaze, and her heart leaped with hope.

With a startled bound she rushed passed the burly ruffian, and sped into the thicket, the loud rustling of the boughs attending her flight, and giving a clue to the direction she had taken.

A volley of imprecations broke from his lips as he started in pursuit of the fugitive.

It was an unequal match, but she had the advantage in being lighter and smaller than her pursuer.

In and out she flashed across the small circular space and through the underbrush, her enemy following with fiery eyes and bated breath.

On she sped until her trembling limbs could hardly sustain her weight, and her breathing was quick and short.

Then he began gaining on her.

Slowly but surely he turned the tide of the race, and as she staggered blindly on he dealt her a blow with the butt of the pistol that felled her to the ground.

She sank prone upon the ground without a moan, a little stream of blood trickling from her mouth.

Dykham raised his pistol again, but a sudden blow sent it flying through the air, and the voice of his wife cried, sternly:

"Dykham, as you hope to live another minute I bid you stop. Things have gone far enough. Before Heaven, if you dare to strike that girl again, or in any way molest her, save by keeping her a close prisoner, I will denounce you to the police."

The innkeeper glared at her furiously, but she stood her ground bravely.

"I repeat it. Don't you harm her more. We will take her to some far-away place and shut her up, and the gold Ingersol shall pay you will keep her for ever hidden. I for one have had blood enough."

He lowered his revolver with a surly frown.

"Have your money, woman, but sooner or later a murderer is scented by justice, and the criminal arraigned for punishment. Now mark my words, that girl will be the connecting link between that one night's work and us. Do you not hesitate?"

She shook her head.

"I'll risk it. We shan't be found out."

"Very well."

Dykham carried the insensate body to the coach, and, procuring some cold water, his wife dashed it into her face.

But it was long ere she showed signs of life, and Mrs. Dykham began to fear that one more victim had been added to their already long list.

She finally opened her eyes, and her fears removed the innkeeper's wife bade him drive on.

But ride as rapidly as they would they could not outstrip their own thoughts, or rid themselves of the knowledge that they were fugitives fleeing from justice.

As yet their fears were without foundation.

The sleuth-hounds of the law knew not the deadly crime they had committed, and the detectives slept in ignorance of the murder done at "Dykham's Inn."

As time passed and the Dykham did not return, the fisherman gave the inn the reputation of being haunted.

There were those who in the first week of their absence had called at the place on business, and heard cries and terrible groans, but, knowing the owner of the building and standing in fear of his wrath, no one ventured to enter it, not knowing what the innkeeper might do should he ever return.

(To be continued.)

WARNED BY THE PLANETS.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

THE earl, unable to utter a word, held out his hand, which the hermit grasped; and Lady Strathspay, who was weeping softly, crossed to her son's side and embraced him.

"And all these years, my boy, you have known you were Lord Strathspay's son? Why didn't you seek your father, and make yourself known to him?"

The young man laughed, and laid his hand caressingly on his mother's rippling hair.

"It was no easy task, my dear mother," he said, playfully, "to be heard the Earl of Strathspay in his castle, and avow myself his son—I thought it better to wait till Fortune made my way clear, and you see she did not fail me."

"But there is other proof yet, the strongest proof of all," continued the hermit, when the little flutter of joy had subsided; "needless, no doubt, but it will make assurance doubly sure."

He arose as he spoke and disappeared into a little alcove curtained off beyond them, almost immediately returning, accompanied by the man Berkitt.

He came limping in, and his dark scared face looked ill and pale.

"Now, sir," commanded the hermit, sternly, indicating a seat near at hand, "we will hear your confession—and if you expect to receive the underserved mercy you have been promised, make a clean breast of it."

The man sat down, shifting uneasily from the earl's solemn eyes.

"That's what I've made up my mind to do," he began, "and if your worship will let me off this time I mean to cut clear of Lady Drummond and the whole pack, and go back to the old folks, where I should a gone over twenty years ago."

"I hardly know how to begin," he went on, his eyes on the floor, his finger working nervously, "it is such a long, tangled-up tale."

"It is over twenty-five years ago that I ran away from my father and mother as lives down in the Tyrol, under the mountains, and went to sea. I was always a roving blade, and tending goats didn't agree with me—I went to sea, and was gone six years."

"I had good luck and made a pretty good deal of cash, and when I landed in Liverpool I thought I'd run up to London and have a week's frolic and then cross the Channel and see after the old folks."

"But instead of a week I stayed a month, and in the course of my frolicking I fell in love with a black-eyed lady's-maid. A half-gipsy she was, but wonderful handsome, and I loved her like mad. But she was a skittish girl, and liked to have more than one string to her bow, and after we was man and wife, and I'd spent all my money on her, she played me false. She hung on to a gentleman's footman, who wore a laced coat, and went off to Northumberland, giving me the slip."

"She was Lady Drummond's maid, and they went to an old place called Cavendish Manor. I followed 'em, bent on revenge. I was a wild feller in those days."

"To cut matters short, I found her and her footman together, and I flew at him, right there in the servants' hall. He caught up a carving-knife, and gave me this ugly scar, and that made me wild. I got out my dagger, which I allus carried, and killed him—killed him right there and then."

"Heaven, yet honours, murder is an awful thing," he went on, shuddering, and working his hands together; "I hain't got that man's blood off my hands to this day—it will follow me to my grave—that night's work was my ruin."

"Lady Drummond, she got wind of the murder, and she had me seized and looked up in one of the great vaults under the old house. Then she came at

me herself—such a woman, with eyes like the stars of Heaven."

"She told me I'd be hang if she informed against me, but she wanted a job done, and, if I'd do it, the murder should never be known, and she'd make Lola come back to me. In course I agreed to do it, and for a month or two things went on smoothly; Lola had a little boy baby born, and she seemed so fond of the child, and so loving like, that I agreed to forget and forgive the past."

"When the boy was a bit over a month old Lady Drummond and Lola packed off on some mysterious work, and left me to take care of him; and a lively time I had. When they got back one job I had to do turned up. Lady Drummond had a baby, and she wanted it murdered. She didn't tell me it was the Earl of Strathspay's baby, but Lola did. She stole it with her own hands from the room of the countess before it were an hour old. I just tell you it made my hair rise when I heard what I had to do. But there was no backing out; Lady Drummond had me tight."

"I took the baby, all wrapped in a quilted flannel cloak, that belonged to Lola's baby, and carried it off to murder it. Good Heavens, I'm sinner enough, but I couldn't do that, loving my own baby as I did too. So I made up my mind to take it home to my old father and mother, feedin' it from a bottle, like I'd seen Lola do, and the little mite lived. You see, it wasn't to die, your worships; it had something else to do."

The countess was sobbing audibly.

"Indeed, your ladyship," continued Berkitt, "I was tender with the babe, as if it were my own, and it slept in my arms day and night."

"But when I got down to the Tyrol, for the life of me I couldn't face the old folks, my money all gone and me a murderer; so I writes a bit, as well as I could—I never did make no great flat at writing—and I rips the lining of the baby's cloak and puts it in, and fastens it together again. Then I took the child and left it on top of a cliff, where I knowed the old man would cross it."

"Then I hang about, and after a while, when I peeps at the baby again, as Heaven hears me, my lords, there was a milch goat a standing over it and it a suckling for dear life. Then, says I, that child will be Earl of Strathspay, one day, and nothing can hinder; and you see, your worships, that it's come true."

"After that I sees the old folks tug up the cliff, hunting the goats, and they comes on the child and carries it off, never dreamin' as myself was so near, and they had not set eyes on me for seven years."

"I went back and told Lady Drummond the job was done, and she believed me. After that big rewards were offered by the earl for his child, and Lady Drummond and Lola sets to work and they picks a red cross into our boy's arm and, as soon as it was healed over, Lola takes him and starts off to France, where the earl was."

"I was mortally opposed to it; but they would have their way, and Lola said our boy would be Earl of Strathspay by and by, so I let 'em alone. She went with the child, and stayed as its nurse, and got a great reward from the earl."

"After that I went to sea, and when I got back I found everything in a flurry. Lady Drummond had found out that the earl's baby was alive, and Lady Strathspay had found out too. I couldn't get the truth of it; but Lola, she was on the watch—she was determined our boy should be the earl's son. So she follows Lady Strathspay down to the Tyrol, and steals the boy away from her when she was out walking."

"She brought him up to Cavendish Manor, and Lady Drummond she swore that I should be hung and our boy should die unless I made away with the boy this time; so I took him off in the night and Lola went with me; but I'd made up my mind that he should live. I did feel as if good luck wouldn't come to my own child if I hurt a hair of his head."

"I brought him across to this cave, and, in spite of all Lola said, left him here. I knowed the hermit lived here and wanted him to find him. Then we goes back to Lady Drummond, and Lola still nurses the earl's boy and I go to see a third time. Coming home again I finds things in a worse muddle than ever. The earl threatening to disown our boy, and he, led on by Lady Drummond—I want you to understand that, your worships, the boy's bad enough, but Lady Drummond led him on to murder his own father, as he thought him to be."

"She laid all the plot for him, and made me take the letter down to Perth, which was to tell him to come to the old Watch Tower."

"Lola's mother, the old woman, Mother Gwineth, was living in the old ruins, and they led the earl into a trap; but a trap for themselves it's turned out to be."

"You know the rest, and now, your honours, one word more and I'm done. Don't be too hard on me and Lola's boy; if he hadn't been put in a false place he might never a' gone to the bad, so don't be too hard on him."

"He shall not suffer," replied Lord Strathapey, in a choked voice.

There needed no farther proof or explanation. Lady Strathapey had already told her story—the story of her long imprisonment in a mad-house—dwelling lightly on her horrible sufferings, for her husband's sake, desiring still, in her infinite tenderness, to spare him all possible pain—and her final escape.

But the body that was found, drifted ashore by the tide, was not hers; the grave in the asylum grounds, over which Lord Strathapey had shed such bitter tears of remorse and agony, was not her grave.

She was not drowned, but in the precipitancy of her flight she lost her mantle, which being found near the river strengthened the supposition that she had been swept off the broken bridge by the high waters.

She succeeded in making her way out of Lancashire, but she was ill and weak, worn out in mind and body, and without money to pay for a night's lodging or a morsel of food.

She walked till her feet were bruised and bleeding, and at the end of the second day sat down behind a hedge to pass the night.

Morning found her ill and delirious, and it happened that self-same morning that the hermit came by on one of his periodical journeys.

He found the pale but lovely lady lying by the wayside, and, like the Good Samaritan of old, he administered to her wants.

He got a carriage, and had her conveyed to a neighbouring farmhouse, and called in a physician, and had her properly nursed and cared for. On his return he stopped to inquire after her welfare, and found her entirely recovered, but utterly destitute and friendless.

Won by his fatherly kindness, the unfortunate lady confided to him her name and station, and the piteous story of her bitter wrongs; and, incredulous as it seemed, he believed and trusted her, and furnished her with sufficient funds to carry her to France, where she found a home in the old Languedoc convent.

Her son, the young Romulus of the Tyrol, was in Heidelberg at the time, and the old hermit thought it wiser to make no mention of him to the poor countess, as the knowledge of his existence would only increase her sorrow and anxiety.

He determined to bide his time, and wait for the working of Providence, little dreaming how marvelous it would be.

CHAPTER LXIX.

MAGGIE RENFREW stood in the self-same garden where she had once stood before in the flush of a spring sunset, her fingers crimsoned with the juice of the ripe berries she was picking for her old father's tea.

He was sitting in the sunlight, with a happy smile upon his face, listening to his daughter's voice trilling a Highland melody.

Down the green lane, bordered with white blooming hawthorn, came the young lord of Strathapey Castle on his fleet black Arab.

Seeing Maggie in the garden, he was out of the saddle and at her side in a breath. She gave him a shy, sweet welcome, her waxen cheeks blooming like the petals of an opening rose.

"I haven't returned an hour," said the young man, his bright blue eyes full of loving delight. "Oh, Maggie, I wanted to see you so—I seem to have been absent a life-time!"

Maggie blushed, and, evading the subject she knew was coming, asked:

"Did you visit the Tyrol, and find your foster-parents alive?"

"Alive and well, and overjoyed to see 'Little Rommie' again. But you should have seen them when their son was restored to them—their boy they had mourned as dead. He wept like a child. I believe he'll lead a virtuous life now."

"Lady Drummond, and Berkit's son, I don't know what to call him, the late Lord Angus, where are they?" continued Maggie.

"Gone, never to set foot on English soil again, and the Dundas woman with them. I feel inexpressibly relieved—we shall have no horrid trials, or punishments, or anything of that kind. I prevailed upon the earl, my father, to give the young man something, and my mother added to it from her own private fortune. He goes to Australia worth twenty thousand. I feel, after all, as if the poor boy was more sinned against than sinning, and it did me good to see him going away in such fine spirits."

"Oh, Lord Strathapey," cried Maggie, her eyes filling with tears, "how good and noble you are!"

"I am so happy, Maggie, I could not make my worst enemy suffer. Not so happy, however," he added, "as not to need another bright drop in my cup of joy. Maggie, my beautiful darling," imprisoning the little stained fingers, "when will you consent to be my own? You know how I love you, my darling, and I think you love me."

"I do love you, my lord."

"Then why not be mine at once—when Pearl is married?"

"Oh, my lord!" she cried, "am I indeed worthy to be your wife! Will your friends receive me willingly?"

"You, my Maggie?" he replied, with passionate ardour; "why, the king on his throne would be none too good for you—and my mother, the countess, has repeatedly said that if she had her choice of all the women in the world you should be my wife, you and no other. So, little proud heart, it is settled, and you must get your bridal robes in readiness."

But the Countess of Mortlake took that trouble on her own hands. She sent her second order to Paris for bridal attire, this time for two complete trousseaux, one for a present to Maggie.

On the night before the wedding morn a large party congregated in the grand drawing-rooms at Strathapey Castle. The earl and his countess seemed to have grown young again in their new-found joy.

"Do look at my dear mistress," said happy Judith, standing with her husband on the terrace without, her own baby boy in her arms, and looking through the glittering window; "only look at her, Hendrick. I declare she looks almost as young as her daughter. How happy we are, how bright it is, after the long dark night."

Within, in her royal velvet robes, with the great diamond flashing in her turban, and her jewelled stick at her side, the old countess was at her gayest. She was having a rich joke. She had Captain Forsythe in the centre of the grand room, his black wig lying at his feet, and she was telling the earl and Lady Neville how shamefully they had been imposed upon.

"I thought it wouldn't do to let the marriage go on without divulging the secret," she chuckled; "so now as you know the whole I'll introduce you, Lord Strathapey, to Sir Bayard Broughton, your future son-in-law."

The earl arose and took Sir Bayard's hand. "Tis quite bewildering," he said; "but I am growing accustomed to surprises. I am glad to see you, Sir Bayard, and if my little Pearl likes you as well in your present character as she liked Captain Forsythe I am wholly satisfied."

Happy little Pearl was hiding her blushes on her mother's shoulder.

"And what does Lady Neville say?" asked the wicked old countess.

Her ladyship was pale with astonishment.

"Why, what can I say?" she cried. "My dear Sir Bayard, I welcome you with all my heart, though I have to regret the loss of Captain Forsythe. Marguerite, love, come and kiss me."

And Marguerite obeyed.

A month later, in the lovely May weather, there was a double wedding at Strathapey Castle, a wedding that pleased the old countess to her heart's core.

Lord Angus married Maggie Renfrew, and Lady Marguerite married Sir Bayard Broughton; and two happier, lovelier brides never danced beneath the blue English skies.

After the wedding there was a grand entertainment, to which hundreds and hundreds of the peasantry flocked, and a great supper and a dance beneath the green rustling oak-boughs. And who should open the ball but the Countess of Strathapey and Colonel Gilbert Vernon!

THE END.

THE YOUNG LOCKSMITH.

CHAPTER I.

ON the border of a small town on the seacoast there stood some thirty odd years since a one-storey building, over the dilapidated doorway of which hung a square sign, that had evidently seen years of service, and that bore the surname and indicated the avocation of the sturdy occupant of the dingy premises, thus:

"BOISSEY, Locksmith."

And between these two words were clearly delineated the emblems of his calling—the padlock and crossed keys.

The name Boissey was not a common one. There was no other like it in all the country round—indeed Luke Boissey had come from France originally.

Its possessor, the locksmith, was a good workman—a hard-fisted, hard-toiling man, though not over-thrifty.

He worked early and late, but he did not flourish, for he was surly in manner and morose in temper.

Boissey was an inveterate snuff taker, and occasionally visited the old tavern near his shop to enjoy his flip or punch, which might have affected his slender means had he been a hard drinker, which he was not.

He had in his employ a lad some fourteen years of age, who possessed a handsome face—when not be-

grimed with shop smoke—and who was active, intelligent and sharp in his business.

The boy was called Edward Corson.

He had been legally bound to serve out his minority with Luke Boissey as apprentice; and had now been six months at work in the shop and under the tender care and mercy of Boissey's termagant "better half."

Master and boy were together one morning, Boissey was busy at his bench, repairing a large safe lock sent over from the town bank, and was suddenly roused from his intent study over the intricacies of the work in hand by an unusual exclamation from his young apprentice, who sprang back from the lathe he was engaged at into the middle of the shop.

"Oh!" screamed the boy. "Oh, by George, that hurts."

"What's the row?" queried his master, looking over his shoulder, and observing the youngster hopping up and down, groaning, and thrusting the two forefingers of his left hand into his mouth.

"What mischief ha' you been up to now?"

"I tell you it hurts though," repeated Ned—as he was called.

"What hurts? What ha' you been doing?"

"Nothing," said Ned, stoutly, though the tears coursed down his smutty cheeks and he had plainly met with an accident.

"What are you crying for then? Take your dirty fingers out o' yer mouth an' answer or I'll make yer howl for something," said his employer.

In obedience to this sharp mandate young Ned withdrew his grimy hand from his mouth.

"It burns like anything," he said, exhibiting his wounded hand, still keeping up his groaning.

And upon examination Boissey found that the skin and flesh had been taken off clean to the bones of two of unlucky Ned's fingers.

"How'd you do it?" asked Boissey, angrily.

"The tool slipped—and I—"

"What the deuce were you doing there, I'd like to know?" continued his master.

"I was only trying to turn a bit of steel, sir—"

"Haven't I told you to keep away from that lathe more than a hundred times? Take your black paw out o' your mouth, I say!"

Then Boissey looked at the hurt again, and added, roughly:

"Go into the house. Show it to yer missus. Tell her you've been in mischief. She'll fix yer flint for you. If she don't, I will when I come. Go! You're allers a doing something wrong. Tell Missus Boissey to put some Rooshy sarve on't. Go!"

Ned made a circuit to keep out of his angered master's reach, lest he should catch a cuff, as he went and bolted into the old tumble-down house to find his mistress.

"Wot's up now?" asked the woman as the boy entered.

"Hurt my hand, ma'am, if you please; and master says you'll put some Rusby sarve on it."

"How'd you do that now? Carelessness or monkeyry I'll be bound. Tell the truth, Ned Corson, or it'll be worse for you."

The boy made a clean breast of it, and his truculent mistress rated him soundly.

"I hain't got no sarve, an' never had none. This'll do just as well; and you may thank your stars that I've got anything to put on to it," she continued, testily.

Then, taking from the cupboard shelf a bottle of something like glue, she put a cotton rag round the scarified fingers, and sent the lad smarting with pain back to the shop to his work.

Poor Ned Corson was a waif. He had passed his thirteenth year when Boissey took him from the overseers of the poor, and gave the usual bonds and assurance that he would board, lodge and clothe the youngster till he was twenty-one, and teach him the locksmith's trade. He had now been an indentured apprentice little over half a year.

His parents had been, however, well-to-do people and his father had left to his mother a handsome estate. Of these facts, however, Ned was totally ignorant. All he knew was that he had been brought up a charity boy, and that the directors of the institution had got him a place where he could learn a trade.

But the events which made him a charity boy occurred at a period in his young life when he entertained small concern for his future; and the affectionate mother who had died in his infancy never had the mortification of knowing that that pretty boy was destined for the experience that overtook him after he was suddenly torn from her embrace, one fatal Christmas night, when the violence of the storm had deprived him of a loving parent.

Hard by the locksmith's shop, upon a long, narrow point of rocky land, a temporary house had been established for the accommodation of the man who had charge of the lighthouse at the outer reef. In

this small tenement resided the keeper and his wife and a little girl some years younger than Boissay's apprentice, whose acquaintance the boy made soon after he came from the poor-house.

"So you don't know who your parents were, Neddy?" said the girl to him, one evening.

"No, Katrin—never heard of 'em."

"No more did I of mine, Neddy."

"Then we have neither of us much to boast of as to origin," replied the lad.

"No; I was brought up here in the lighthouse," said Katrin.

"I served the first dozen years of my life in the poor-house," returned Ned, without a blush.

"It was no fault of yours that you were placed there when an infant, Neddy."

"Who said it was, Katrin?"

"Nobody; but—"

"But what?" queried Ned.

"I was thinking," replied the girl, "how little difference, after all, there has been thus far in our fortunes. But I have been taken good care of, Neddy, and the old folks are very kind to me here."

"I don't complain, Katrin. I have enough to eat, good shelter and clothes. What more can anybody have?"

And to state the truth the lad had not been really ill-treated. His master, Boissay, was a rough fellow, but not a bad man in the main.

And now we will inform the reader how this boy got into the poor-house and how this girl chanced to fall into the lighthouse-keeper's hands.

CHAPTER II.

LATE in the bleak month of December, some ten years previously, a terrific storm had occurred upon the coast. For four-and-twenty hours the gale raged, but its fury did not reach its height until Christmas morning, the second of its three days' continuance.

The wind blew fearfully straight inland from the sea, and the stoutest hearts were appalled.

On the land chimneys were toppled over, houses unroofed, stately trees, though bare of foliage, were uprooted, and the shipping in the docks even was jammed and tossed against the piers and seriously damaged by the violent high tides.

On the morning of the third day of this blow, during which hundreds of lives were lost, the residents along the shore were painfully exercised to witness in the offing a large merchantman labouring heavily in the riotous sea.

She was apparently rudderless, for she came on stern foremost, without a possible hope that any succour could be afforded her.

It was three hours after daybreak when she was first seen by the old lightkeeper. Soon afterwards the townspeople around collected to the number of five-and-twenty and watched with intense interest the course of the ill-fated vessel.

"Many's the tough blow I've seen on this coast," said the old lightkeeper, who had passed twenty years of his life in that region; "but ne'er a one like this. The surf never rolled in as it does here to-day 'thin my remembrance."

"What do you make her out, Blount?" asked a bye-stander.

"A brig, I should say," replied Blount, the lightkeeper. "Masta all gons," he continued, turning the telescope toward the labouring craft. "An' now she lifts I see she's a barque. No chance for her—not a ghost o' one."

Still watching her, he continued:

"She'll fetch up on the lower reef yonder. She's abandoned, evidently. No; there's a figure—a human creature—a man—two more—half-a-dozen!"

"Are you sure?" inquired those around him.

"Certain. See for yourselves. Now, lads, to help them."

The glass was turned on the approaching barque, and first one and then another offered suggestions.

"Well, men," said old Blount, at length, "she must go on to the rocks in less 'n twenty minutes. I can't see no boats. They must have been stove, or washed off her. There she goes, bang on to the reef. Heaven help 'em now!"

And all eyes were strained to see what next would follow.

The barque struck, then lifted, swung over, stove a hole in her quarter, and was then raised again by the force of the huge waves, and smashed sideways upon the bed of boulders which lay underneath, and which were shrouded in a sheet of seething white foam, while the tremendous seas that crashed and swept over her hull seemed bent on thumping out what little of life there was left in her.

A good life-boat was at hand, and soon there was a call for volunteers.

Twenty willing hearts responded.

"There's livin' beings aboard there," cried Blount, "an' the gale's lightenin'! It's a risky business, lads, I know, though we've got as good a boat as ever

swum; an' it aren't for me to say as she can't live in that surf yonder. I've got the will, but I ain't got the strength I once had, as you all know."

After striking the third time the ruined vessel lay almost stationary, wedged in among the breakers.

But the sea broke fearfully around her; and from the spot where she was seen with the glass there appeared but the faintest hope that she could be reached even if the life-boat could be got safely through the surf.

But the young men who took the oars were stout fellows, and brave-hearted as they were strong-limbed.

Amid the cheers of the excited crowd the boat was launched.

And, at the word, her sharp prow was put in the face of the pitiless storm.

She passed the line of inward rolling waves in safety, and, under Heaven's favour, she was soon seen heading steadily toward the scene of the wreck.

On arriving within hail of the doomed vessel it was found, though there was danger of staving the boat, that by getting to leeward the water was deep and less troubled, while from an opening on that side there was a mere chance—if any one aboard the barque were yet alive—to get a line out from the vessel, attached to some floating object, by which means some of the would-be rescuers might get on board and learn the real state of affairs there.

In a few minutes a voice was heard.

"Barque ahoy. On deck, there!"

A faint response came back directly.

"Life-boat ahoy!"

For the few remaining sufferers had seen the boat approaching.

Shortly afterwards an empty cask fell over the side of the wreck with a line fastened to a marine-spike thrust in at its bung-hole.

This was secured by the boat's crew, and quickly after this a brave young sailor was passing upon it, hand-over-hand, to the wreck, though he was well nigh drowned in his desperate attempt to get aboard the vessel.

The sea was breaking heavily over the barque, but the plucky mariner went amidstships to find five men lashed to the torn rigging.

"Is this all?" he shouted; "are there any more aboard?"

"Twenty below decks," returned one of the men, faintly.

"Alive?" shouted the sailor.

No one could answer this query.

Down he plunged into the cabin, which he found half filled with water.

There was no life to be seen below.

Half-a-dozen staring, upturned blue faces met his startled gaze here and there—drowned men, who had been dead there for hours; but he could find no living beings to assist, and was floundering back to the deck, drenched through, when his ear suddenly caught the sound of a moan that came somewhere from the side of the vessel, and, looking up, he encountered, in an upper berth, a pile of blankets, which he quickly pulled aside, to discover the bodies of a woman and child.

To drag this pair out in his stout arms, and take them up to the forward deck, was but the work of a moment, and he found, to his great joy, that the woman was still living, but the boy uttered no sound and gave no sign of life.

The wind had abated, and with the ebb of the tide the sea subsided considerably.

The young mariner threw a white sheet over his head as a signal for help from the life-boat, and two more of the crew quickly passed over the line from the boat to the vessel.

The half-dead men were released from their lashings in the shrouds, and, after a brief delay, the boat ventured alongside, though it was still so rough that the danger of swamping her was imminent.

By dint of good management, however, she was got into a position where the sufferers could be forced on board her.

One was lost in his weakness and fright, but four of the passengers, one of the crew, with the lady and child, were placed in the life-boat, which swung off upon the top of a long, rolling wave at the watched-for moment, and the happy crew pulled away shoreward, amid the joyous shouts of the busy multitude there gathered upon the rude beach.

"Steady now, lads," said the sailor, cheerily, as he held the tiller, and put the nose of the life-boat straight into the coming surf that still rolled heavily in upon the gravelly stretch of beach whence they had started.

"Steady, boys, and altogether. Now give way, once more, and here we are."

The next moment forty stout men, headed by old Blount, up to their waists in the tumbling surf, had secured the returning boat with its precious freight, which they drew up and out upon the shore, as if

it had been but a feather's weight in that glad moment.

The child was a beautiful boy, some three years old—the lady's only one.

There were a score of ready hands to receive this woman and baby, and it was found that there was a ray of hope for the little one.

"He aren't dead!" said the lightkeeper, quickly: "Not by no means. Make haste—put him in hot blankets—send for a doctor—we'll save him too!"

Thus it turned out.

The boy was cared for promptly, and after an hour or two was resuscitated.

The mother was too far gone, and expired on the shore, without giving any intimation as to who she was or whence she came.

The barque went to pieces before the gale ceased, and was a total loss.

The rescued people went their ways, and the woman was buried by the town authorities, none of those who were saved being able to give any information regarding the female passengers.

The child was taken care of by the overseers of the poor, and no friends or relatives appeared there to claim him.

They gave him the name of Edward Corson—for lack of a better one; and this was "Ned," the hero of our present story.

Thus he fell into the charge of the town authorities, and thus it occurred that over ten years afterwards the boy became the indentured apprentice of Luke Boissay, locksmith.

CHAPTER III.

KATRIN DELORME had been an inmate of the lightkeeper's family some eight or nine years. She, also, had been saved after a disaster, and Blount had been her rescuer, when he was half a score of years younger than he now was.

The circumstances attending the girl's rescue were different from those of the boy.

Katrin had been found by the lightkeeper early one morning, nestled in the storm-sheets of a small boat, wrapped up in a pair of stout blankets, sound asleep, and entirely unconscious of the danger to which she had evidently been exposed—no one could say how long—when she was discovered.

Just at the gray of dawn upon a clear, bright summer's day, when Blount was preparing to extinguish his lights, he saw in the distance a small boat floating towards the shore, which seemed to have gone adrift, or got detached from some vessel coming into harbour, perhaps; for, when his eye fell upon it, he supposed it to be empty.

The tide was at half-flood, and though the sea was in active motion the boat came steadily to the shore, and was thrown up on the beach, where the lightkeeper stood watching, ready to secure it.

Upon examining it he was surprised to find in the stern, beneath the thwart, a heavy bundle of bedding which he quickly opened to discover the form of a living child!

Two days afterwards he learned that some spars and boxes had come ashore during the night, and it was conjectured that an inward-bound vessel had foundered at sea during a recent gale, and gone down—and that this boat had been resorted to by crew or passengers for safety.

Whatever was the fact, this child, emaciated and half unconscious when Blount found her, was all that was left to indicate the catastrophe.

It was a girl, apparently only two or three years old.

No farther clue could then be had to this mystery, which was but a single though an unusual incident in the experience of the old lightkeeper, who had known so much of vicissitude in his long years of duty upon the coast.

He took the infant girl home at once, and placed her in charge of his good wife, who applied herself with such zeal to the immediate nursing of the child that she soon recovered; and from that day she was treated as their own—for they had no children, and the woman became fondly attached to the little waif.

Among the articles washed ashore at this time was an old battered iron-bound teak-wood chest, which, upon being opened, was found to contain some female apparel and a few dresses appropriate to the age and size of this girl.

This trunk was claimed by Blount, under the circumstances, as it was conceded that it might have belonged to her parents.

He took it to his house, and subsequently ascertained that he was probably correct in his surmises, for the marks upon the linen she wore when discovered and those upon several other garments in the chest were the same:

"K. D."

A small Prayer-book was also found in the teak-

wood box, with the name of Katrina Delorme written on the fly-leaf.

The little girl took this name, abbreviated to Katrin, at the lightkeeper's suggestion.

The humble couple adopted the child, and she grew up to be the young girl already introduced to the reader.

Two years passed away, during which the girl grew towards womanhood, and Ned improved his opportunity to acquire the locksmith's trade, applying himself industriously to his work with more than the ordinary success of youthful apprentices.

He possessed genius naturally, and his crusty employer, Boissey, did not fail to observe this and profit by it.

He had acquired some share of a common education at the institution where Boissey found him.

He could read and write fairly, and after awhile he became studious.

But he had few opportunities to improve himself in the locksmith's family, for a few old books and stray treatises upon mechanical arts formed the library of his master, and he had no means of supplying himself with other books.

Still what he did read he remembered.

The contents of the worn volumes about the musty shelves of his employer he learned almost by heart, so frequently did he recur to them for want of a more extensive supply.

When Ned had attained his seventeenth year he had grown to be a stout, large-framed lad, and had become a very good workman.

He had got over his boyishness and was growing constantly more and more manly in his demeanour and his habits.

He was still but a lad, yet he stuck steadily to the bench, and could finish a very good piece of work after he had been three years in the locksmith's service.

Within that period he had given his attention to the intricacies of the profession with marked assiduity, and he had encountered most of the difficulties and annoyances attendant upon the life of the poor apprentice.

Boissey's business was not extensive, nor were its details greatly varied. For the most part he simply manufactured locks for safes, trunks, doors, and fire-arms. Being a very good workman himself, he was always busy about something.

But he accumulated no money, and only realized out of his steady, six days' labour in the week a comfortable living for himself, his wife, and the boy.

During the three first years he had been at work with Boissey Ned had become widely known.

At all the party gatherings, the "sociables," the picnics, the fairs, and other pleasant meetings of the youthful portion of the town Ned got to be a prominent man, while cherry-cheeked Katrin was the belle of the neighbourhood.

They went and came together until they had become exceedingly fond of each other.

Ned Corson was a member of the little boat club of the village, a good talker at the debating society, a leader in the sports and pastimes of the young men—and altogether a very useful member of society.

Courageous, manly, prompt, and liberal in his conduct and intercourse with everybody, he proved a very popular companion among the growing young folks of the village.

And when he entered his eighteenth year he was one of the foremost and most promising of the youthful mechanics of the place.

Among the families he visited and in which Katrin had for years been a welcome and constant guest, was that of the brother of old Blount, the light-keeper.

This man was a jovial old sea-captain, who had amassed considerable property, had retired upon a comfortable competency, and resided in a large house with his two grown-up daughters.

At this house there had been a gathering one night of the young friends of the village, and a pleasant entertainment had been given by this gentleman's daughters, which was numerously attended.

Dancing, music, and feasting had been the order of the evening, and the festivities had continued to a late hour.

Captain Blount had been an invalid for two years. He had lately become crippled by rheumatism in his limbs, and could move about only with great difficulty.

Still he was always companionable, and his mental faculties were unimpaired.

The jolly old captain was a famous story-teller, and never better pleased than when the young people gathered about him, to whom he would relate wondrous tales of his travels in other lands.

On the night alluded to he had been unusually loquacious and joyous.

The party broke up at a late hour, young Ned Corson being the last to bid him good-night.

Miss Katrin concluded to remain with the daughters till next day, and, after taking his customary cheerful leave of his pretty neighbour, Ned departed for his humble home at Luke Boissey's, nearly a mile distant.

(To be continued.)

SECOND SIGHT.

WHEN I was a child and read fairy tales I used to wish that I had the "invisible cap," that I might go where I chose without the knowledge of any other mortal. I can't say I wish it now, for if people use me as they do other folk—and what more likely?—I should be apt to hear no good of myself, and to be in a chronic state of rage on account of the ten, fifteen, or twenty years added to my age by my dearest friends, who knew me first when "I was a married woman and they were only school girls." I should hear criticisms on my dress and my "tricks and manners," and hear old bachelors speak of me as a designing widow, on whom it was dangerous to call in Leap-year.

No, I have given up my desire for the invisible cap, but I really should like to have second sight. It must be convenient. If I had an old Scotch uncle or aunt, possessed of the accomplishment, I should sit down and write to him, or her, and say:

"Make your abode with me for life. Live in my heart and pay no rent. You will be more useful than the washerwoman, and more necessary than the cook." And I should not set that aunt, if it was an aunt, to washing dishes. I should provide her with a big arm-chair and a bottle of whatever is necessary, and set her to "speering" forthwith.

There she would sit in her chair, all handy, and when I said, "I'll have codfish for dinner," she would say:

"Don't do it, Mary."

And I would say:

"Why not?"

And she would say:

"All the Toplices are coming to dinner. I see um."

And then I should make a preparation of roast and boiled, and of dessert, and of after-dinner coffee, to say nothing of before-dinner soup, and not writhing with anguish when the smell of codfish and the Toplices burst into the hall together.

When I put on that light silk dress and that new bonnet, and take that new parasol in the fingers of my new gloves, with a blue sky overhead, perhaps Aunt would begin to green and would say:

"Beware; bide at home."

But wouldn't that be better than to be caught in the rain? I should think so.

She would have visions of Biddy giving away the cold mutton to her cousin at the area gate, and would know why we always had so little butter and so much soap-fat.

In fact, she would be better than any private detective, and no end of a comfort to everybody.

A. F.

RED HELM.

CHAPTER IX.

On the larboard quarter they deary
A liquid column low'ring shoot on high;
The foaming base the angry whirlwinds sweep,
Where curling billows rouse the fearful deep:
Still round and round the fluid vortex dies,
Diffusing briny vapours o'er the skies.

The horrid apparition still draws nigh,
And white with foam the wheeling billows fly.

Falconer.

BENDING towards the cabin door, Faith now called the boy, who promptly came.

"Keep her head to the sea," said the young girl, relinquishing the helm to the lad, "and do not allow her to come up into the wind."

"Yes, ma'am," answered the youth; "I will do my best."

Faith then descended into the cabin. She found Brenton awake, apparently watching for some person.

The moment he beheld her his face lighted with a glad smile.

"I knew you would come soon," said he; "the boy told me so. I have been asleep—have I not?" As he spoke he glanced round him, a little of the wild expression still in his eyes.

"Yes," said Faith, sitting by his side, "I think you have, and I am glad of it. You feel better, do you not?"

"Yes, I think I do; but there is a strange, dull pain in my head for which I cannot account."

In a few words the young girl explained.

"Oh, yes, I now remember being hurt," said he; "but where are the rest of them—where is the captain?"

"You will never see him again. All have been

carried overboard, except you and the cabin boy and myself."

"What? the captain and all the crew gone!" cried Brenton, half rising from his bunk in his dismay. "What saved the craft, then? for if I remember right," he added, clapping a hand to his brow, "there was a heavy gale raging when I was last on deck."

"True; but I understand much of nautical affairs, from having been taken by the Malays on many of their cruises. I saved this ship, or at least I have saved her thus far."

"You!" exclaimed Brenton, his eyes luminous with surprise. "What, in such a gale?"

"Yes."

"Then, indeed, you are a remarkable woman."

"You must not allow yourself to get excited," said Faith, becoming alarmed at his wild manner.

"No, no," he answered, "I am calm—perfectly calm."

She gently laid a hand on his brow, and the touch seemed at once to soothe him.

In a few minutes he again dropped to sleep. Faith sat watching him, when suddenly she heard the shrill tones of the lad on deck raised to a pitch of alarm.

"Quick, lady, quick—on deck."

To gain the deck was with the young woman the work of a moment.

"What is the matter?" she inquired.

The boy pointed to windward, where a huge waterspout was seen rushing down toward the ship.

It was truly an awful spectacle.

A huge cloud, shaped like an inverted umbrella, was seen about two leagues distant, from which, touching the sea, extended a long black, curving column, resembling an elephant's trunk. At the base of this the water was seen rising and falling with a motion bearing some resemblance to the sand in an hour-glass.

Meanwhile a roaring, booming sound, like the discharge of cannon, proclaimed the terrific commotion of the sea in that quarter.

The boy had turned as pale as death at the appalling sight of that destructive mass sweeping down towards the ship.

"What shall we do?" he said; "you and I are the only ones aboard. We cannot work the vessel."

"One thing you must make up your mind to, to begin with, boy."

"And what's that?"

"To keep a stout heart."

"I will try, ma'am," answered the poor boy, "but what can we do?"

"In the first place, you go forward and haul aft that staysail sheet. Not too much—only a few pulls."

"Yes, ma'am."

And away he went to execute the order.

"Well done," said Faith, when he had finished his task, "and now do you think you and I could pull a little on that forebrace? There is some of the foretopsail left, I see—enough, at all events, to help us."

"We might manage to do it," said the boy.

"Come, then; there is no time to lose."

So saying, with a rope always kept in readiness near the helm, she lashed the wheel amidships, and the boy went forward to the forebrace.

It was a difficult task to move the yard, but as the ship suddenly plunged between two seas, which in a measure shielded her from the wind, they succeeded in hauling it up sharp.

"Now I trust we may escape the spout," said Faith, coolly.

"And how so? See, ma'am, it is coming straight down upon us."

"Yes, but it will soon change its course, as you may know if you watch the direction of those clouds near it. You can see that they are drifting away towards the West."

"But the waterspout!" cried the boy. "What have they to do with that?"

"They show that it will change its course and break, perhaps, ere it reaches the ship."

"Are you sure?"

"No, I am not sure. I wish I was. Sometimes those vast columns of water come straight on, no matter by what they may be disturbed."

"Perhaps this will do the same."

"Perhaps so, but let us hope for the best, and trust in Heaven. It is all we can do."

With that she returned to the helm and seized it firmly, keeping the ship's head close hauled.

Meanwhile the boy, trembling in every limb, leaned across the rail, watching the spout as it came on.

Catching the lurid rays of the sun, which now suddenly burst forth from behind a bank of clouds, the tremendous water-giant, as one might figuratively term the phenomenon we are speaking of, flashed with myriads of sparkling points, red, green, and yellow, all rising and falling like gold and silver stars.

In the vicinity the sea was tinged of crimson colour, which, blending with the amber hue of the

waves farther beyond, gave to the ocean an aspect both weird and singular.

This almost unearthly sight fell upon the ship, so that with her tattered sails and broken sheets and ropes she looked as if she were sailing into some unknown world.

"Beautiful!" exclaimed Faith, involuntarily.

"How can you say so, ma'am?" exclaimed the boy. "It looks horrible to me!"

The column, meanwhile, was every moment drawing nearer the ship.

"It will not break," exclaimed the boy; "it will strike the ship, and, if it does, it will be sure to sink us."

In fact, Faith also was now of this opinion.

The spout had reached the place where the clouds moving in an opposite direction indicated a change of wind, and yet there it was, coming straight down toward the vessel.

The young girl kept her glance upon the perilous object.

There it was, drawing nearer and nearer, and yet she could see no way of saving the ship from its influence.

At length the spout had gained a position within a few hundred feet of the ship.

Seen thus it was truly an awful spectacle.

Faith had never before been so near one of these terrible visitors of the ocean, and with a feeling of awe such as she had not experienced in all her life she now watched the black, gigantic column and the waters lashed to thundering spray and boiling foam around it.

Nearer—nearer it came every moment!

Already every timber in the vessel shook as if the craft were alive, and, knowing her impending doom, shuddered to think of it.

But Faith did not for a moment lose her presence of mind.

Keenly watching the spout, she judged that it would strike the vessel ahead, if it did strike at all, for she still had faint hopes that it would break up ere reaching the ship.

"We are lost!" exclaimed the boy, who had now made his way to the side of the young woman.

"Don't let us despair yet," said she; "there may in fact be no need of it."

"I see no way of escape," said the lad, "but I will try to meet my fate bravely."

The spout was now within a hundred yards of the ship, which already began to feel the motion of the whirling current of air, as was evinced by her sails flapping about on the yards.

Faith had now little hope of escaping the terrible visitant, but she resolved at any rate to delay the calamity as long as possible.

"Run forward and square in that foreyard. I will help you," she said to the boy.

He looked up at her in surprise, but meeting the firm glance of her eyes he hastened to obey.

There was, in fact, no sign of fear on the lovely features of the young girl.

Her face, catching the rays of the sun, glowed with an expression almost divine. Resolute and unshrinking, her brilliant orbs glowing, her cheek rosy with bright colour, her long fair hair waving on the wind, she presented a spectacle on which no person could have looked in that trying hour without a feeling of confidence.

Having lashed the wheel amidships, she ran forward and helped the boy square the foreyard, a task which was accomplished without much difficulty, owing to there being little wind now to retard their efforts.

Faith then returned to the helm, and with skilful hands, guiding the ship dead before the wind, she ran a race with the waterspout.

A strange race it was.

The giant column, striding along the sea, gained fast on her, seeming nearer and larger every time she turned to look at it.

On—still on it sped!

In a few minutes more it must strike the vessel at this rate.

Still, however, while the boy was almost beside himself with fear, Faith calmly held her position at the wheel, and guided the craft on its perilous way.

Already the currents around the waterspout fanned her cheeks.

Already she could feel them in her long, flowing locks of fair hair, and yet she showed no sign of fear, neither hand nor muscle trembling as she maintained her grasp of the wheel-spokes.

"It is coming! Here it comes!" screamed the boy as, rattling, roaring, crashing on, the spout came to near that the outer edge of the umbrella-like, funnel-shaped cloud seemed to hang directly over the ship!

In fact the vessel was already in the whirl and roar of the white water around the spout, a strange, ominous, humming sound passing through her quivering timbers.

"Hold on hard, boy!" cried Faith; "lash yourself to the mizenmast with a rope!"

Ere the boy could obey, however, it seemed as if

the spout must rush down upon and overwhelm the ship.

On it came, and the young woman had given all up as lost, when suddenly she noticed that the huge column made a sideling movement, as if about passing across the stern.

Quick as thought the fair pilot put down her helm, causing the vessel's head to come up.

At the same moment the huge spout, roaring as if charged with a hundred thunderbolts, passed astern of the ship, and went sweeping on far away to leeward, leaving the ship undisturbed.

"Safe!" cried Faith, quietly.

"Yes, we are safe now!" answered the cabin boy, clapping his hands.

The sun was shining brightly; the clouds were breaking all over the heavens, and the wind had gone down, so that there was little more than a fresh breeze.

The young woman, surrendering the helm to the lad, went below, to find Brenton still fast asleep.

She looked at him earnestly a moment; then she went on deck and again took her place at the helm.

"We shall doubtless soon fall in with some friendly vessel," she muttered; "then all will be right again."

Far and near she scanned the ocean; but as yet she could see no sail.

In the distance, however, right ahead, loomed up the shores of an island, towards which Faith deemed it best to direct the ship under present circumstances.

Booming directly before the wind, the vessel made excellent headway, and before night the coconut trees lining the shores of the island were visible.

"We shall soon be there if this wind should continue," said Faith to the boy.

"Yes, ma'am; but what craft are those yonder, astern of us, just how in sight?"

"I don't know," answered the young woman, who perceived why she had not previously seen those vessels.

A light fog in that direction had hitherto screened from sight those sails, which were now distinctly revealed by the rising of the mist.

Faith procured the telescope and carefully scrutinized them. They were low in the water, with rakish masts, which the spectator immediately recognized.

"The other Malay vessels!" said she, turning a shade paler. "They have doubtless seen us, and are in pursuit."

"We cannot escape them," said the cabin boy.

"I am afraid not," was Faith's answer, "but we must do our best. There is no telling what may happen in our favour. It seems to me that waterspout is passing pretty close to them."

"It is," said the boy, "although we can't exactly tell so far off."

"I am sure it will strike one of them," answered Faith.

Eagerly the two watched the gigantic column of water as it swept on with terrific velocity toward the two vessels.

For a quarter of an hour the huge, moving mass kept on until, suddenly, through her glass, Faith saw it strike one of the sails.

"There she goes!" exclaimed the young woman.

"The spout has caught one of those vessels, and shattered her to pieces, as I can now see no vestige of her!"

"And the other vessel?" inquired the boy, "that is still in sight, is it not?"

"Yes; still heading this way, and—no, no, she has stopped, probably to pick up the crew of the wrecked craft."

"That will help us," said the lad.

"Yes, that will help us. We are making good way toward the island, though I wish we could carry more canvas. But that is impossible, short-handed as we now are."

By sundown the ship was heading into one of the island bays.

It was a beautiful place, this far-away isle, seeming almost a Paradise, with its verdure, its flowers and fruits, and its gushing streams.

Faith kept the vessel heading well in under the lee of a high ridge, where she gave the command to anchor.

The cable being all ready there was nothing to do except to knock away the stopper, a task which was easily performed by the boy.

As the vessel swung to Faith went below, to find Brenton awake.

"Where are we now?" he inquired. "I thought I heard the noise of anchoring."

"We are at anchor, sir," answered Faith, "and now I am going to set the table that we may have something to eat. Have you an appetite?"

"No, not yet."

Faith soon had the table set, and she brought Brenton a cup of strong tea, of which he partook with evident relish.

At sunset Faith was on deck, scanning the waters far and near for the Malay craft.

There was, however, no sign of her at present.

"We must keep a good watch," said she to the boy; "no doubt the vessel we are looking for is hidden somewhere off there in the midst."

In fact there was seen, far away to windward, detached clouds of mist scudding along like gigantic phantoms over the surface of the sea.

"I will stand the first watch, boy," said the young woman; "meanwhile you had better go below and get some rest and sleep, for you must be very tired."

"You must be tired, too, ma'am," said the lad.

"I will stand the first watch, if you like."

Faith, however, would not listen to this, and the lad was obliged to comply with her wishes.

He went below and was soon fast asleep, leaving the fair pilot alone on deck.

Worn and weary though she was, Faith struggled hard against the feeling of drowsiness which assailed her, and kept a vigilant watch.

The moon was now shining brightly, but the mist was still on the sea.

At last, however, it rolled away, and there, as her fears had told her, was the Malay craft, lightly rocking and swaying on the long, rolling seas, scarcely a league distant.

"This is bad," muttered the young girl, "although our ship being in shadow, I don't think they see her yet; but when daylight comes they will certainly discover us!"

She bent her head on her hand in deep thought, endeavouring to hit on some plan of escape. But she could think of none.

Her only hope was that the Malay would steer so far south before morning as not to observe the ship, which he might then infer had passed the island and kept on out to sea.

Before long she believed that her hopes would be realized, for the pirate schooner was suddenly seen to change her course towards the other extremity of the island.

Faith watched her until she was out of sight, feeling very thankful for what had happened.

At last she thought she would go below and call the boy, as it was now time for him to take his turn at watch.

Accordingly she descended into the cabin, and passing Brenton's berth, towards which she directed a tender glance on perceiving that he was fast asleep, she moved on to the bunk occupied by the lad.

The poor boy lay on his back, his hands crossed on his breast, his face calm and peaceful, his eyelids tightly closed, and his breathing deep as if he were enjoying to its full the sweets of repose.

Faith as she watched him thus felt loth to wake him.

Suddenly she saw his lips move.

"Mother, I have come! Here I am, home at last!" muttered the boy.

This was too much for Faith, who turned away her head, her eyes filling with tears.

"I cannot do it," she said to herself; "I cannot wake him. He is dreaming of home."

So saying, the young woman again went on deck, determined to keep watch all night.

She was a brave girl, as we have shown; but it was hard for her to resist the feeling of drowsiness she now felt, and which weighed down her eyelids as if they were lead.

To keep herself awake she paced the deck; but her tired limbs craved rest, and she was at last obliged to sit down.

On the carpenter's chest, with her cheek against the rail, she fell asleep in spite of all her efforts to the contrary.

Suddenly she woke with a start.

She had slept long, for it was the morning sun shining in her eyes, which had probably waked her. Springing to her feet, she glanced out to sea, to behold a sight which sent the blood rushing back in a torrent to her heart!

There was the dreaded vessel—the Malay craft—scarcely half a league distance, heading under all sail, towards the ship!

"Lost! lost!" muttered Faith, clasping her hands.

Then a sudden thought flashed across her mind. The Malays, it was true, had seen the ship, but they had no reason to suppose there was any person aboard, except the fact of her being anchored.

About a ship's length distant there was a line of rocks partially covered with water. If they should find the vessel thumping against these, they would conclude that every soul aboard had been lost.

Now, by letting the cable go, it would be easy to let the vessel be carried against the rocks; but the noise of the iron links spinning round the windlass and passing through the hawse-hole would be heard by the Malays.

Faith was puzzled to know how to obviate this difficulty, when, chancing to glance forward, she fancied that one of the links, which had evidently become damaged by parting, was secured by a rivet.

What more easy than to knock out this little piece of iron by one or two blows of a hammer? As a mere



[“MOTHER, I HAVE COME.”]

child could have done this, Faith resolved at once to knock out the rivet.

Accordingly, creeping along the deck on hands and knees, that her head might not be seen over the top of the bulwarks by the Malays, the young woman, hammer in hand, soon gained the cable.

Two light blows were sufficient to knock away the rivet after taking off the screw, when, with a light splash, away went the cable, dropping into the sea.

“Now then to conceal ourselves!” muttered Faith; “for, unfortunately, were we to take to the boat we would be seen from the schooner.”

She descended into the cabin and first waked Brenton.

“Hist, sir! Are you able to move?”

“Yes,” replied the young man, rising and rubbing his eyes. “Oh, it is you, is it? I have been dreaming about you.”

“There is no time to lose, sir,” said Faith, blushing. “The Malays are coming, and we must hide ourselves.”

“The Malays?”

“Yes; they are not two miles from here.”

“What shall we do?”

“Conceal ourselves—there is no other way.”

“But they will probably find us.”

“They may, or they may not. We may have an opportunity of escaping.”

Brenton left his bunk.

Faith helped him to his feet, and was glad to see that he could stand.

“You feel much better, do you not?” she inquired.

“Yes; I feel almost as well as ever,” he answered.

“We had better take some provisions with us,” said Faith, “as we cannot tell how long we may be obliged to remain pent up in the ship’s hold.”

“They will be sure to look there before anywhere else,” remarked Brenton.

“No, because they will not suspect there is any person aboard. They will find the ship up against the rocks, and will suppose that she was carried there after we were all swept overboard. The state of the deck, the broken caboose and wheel-house, with other signs, will show them that some heavy seas have swept over the vessel.”

“Hark!” said Brenton at that moment.

A wild cry was heard astern, a noise as of a thousand fiends let loose from the lower regions.

“They are already exulting,” said Faith; “they are shrieking the Malay pirate yell, which never bodes good to those who hear it!”

As the young woman spoke the noise of the ship grating against the rocks was heard.

“There, we have struck,” said Faith, “and our

enemies will suppose that the vessel has drifted here without human agency.”

“They will, unless they saw you,” answered Brenton: “are you sure they did not?”

“Yes. True I stood up for a moment on deck, but the roundhouse aft screened me, I am confident, from their gaze.”

“That is well.”

“As we have no time to lose had we not better go down at once into the hold?”

“Yes,” said Brenton. “There is an opening in the steerage, I perceive, through which we can make our way.”

So saying, he passed into the main hold, followed by Faith and the cabin-boy.

“Hark,” said the young woman, as the shouting of the Malays now was heard nearer than before. “Here they come!”

In the centre of the main hold there was a hatch leading down into the lower hold.

Brenton opened it, and, having first assisted Faith therein, he permitted the cabin-boy to enter next, after which he followed.

Just as he did so he heard the rushing of the water dashed aside by the bows of the Malay craft as she came on.

The next moment followed the shouting of voices and the trampling of feet; then the sound of a boat being lowered was heard.

“Here they come!” said the young man as he closed the hatch above his head.

Suddenly Faith bent over toward him.

“My scarf!” said she; “I left it in the cabin. It is in such a shape that I am afraid the Malays will know I threw it off only a few minutes ago, and thus discover our presence aboard the ship.”

“I hardly think they will be keen enough for that,” said the young man. “I do not see how they can tell.”

“You do not know them as well as I do,” said Faith. “They are almost as keen and cunning as Red Indians. The creases in the scarf, and,” added Faith, blushing, “its warmth will show them it has been but recently taken off my neck.”

Brenton smiled.

“I will go and get it for you, then,” said he.

“No, you shall not go!” exclaimed Faith, in alarm. “I will go myself, especially as I know just where it is.”

So saying, she sprang towards the hatch, but Brenton interposed.

“There may be danger,” said he, “as I can already hear those fellows climbing on deck.”

“Nay!” said Faith.

But ere she could utter another word the young man had sprung out of the hatch and closed it.

Then he made his way hastily towards the cabin, which he soon gained, to discover the scarf lying across the back of a chair.

He picked up the article and was about leaving the cabin when he beheld the shadow from some person above projecting over the steps.

“They are aboard,” thought the young man, “and it will not do for me to pass those steps, lest they see me.”

Even as the thought passed through his mind he saw the feet of the Malay on the top step.

He crouched behind a lounge, this being the nearest hiding-place that presented itself.

As he did so the Malay entered the cabin and stood, dagger in hand, peering round him.

He was a sturdy-looking fellow, and Brenton, weakened by his recent injury, could scarcely hope to cope with him.

Besides, he felt the necessity of keeping the secret of himself and companions being aboard, otherwise the whole pack of Malays would be upon them.

Nevertheless it was with difficulty he restrained himself from springing out upon the man and driving his dagger—the weapon he had obtained from the Malay he had previously conquered—into the fellow’s heart.

It seemed in fact as if he would be obliged to do this, as the man now was approaching the spot where he lay concealed.

Clutching his dagger firmly, he waited until the fellow was so near him that their eyes met, when, with the bound of a tiger, he sprang upon him, clutching him by the throat with one hand and lifting his dagger with the other.

Surprised as he was by the suddenness of the assault, the Malay seemed to readily recover his presence of mind.

He threw himself back with a force and celerity which at once freed him from the clutch of his adversary; then, parrying a thrust made at him by the young sailor, he suddenly threw himself, with the quickness of a flash, upon the other, and sent his keen steel towards his heart.

Brenton, however, was on his guard. He avoided the thrust by stepping on one side; then, fearing that the Malay would make an outcry and thus draw his shipmates to the spot, he threw a hand over his mouth, and dealt him, with his clenched fist, on the side of the head, a blow that stunned him.

Meanwhile, as the noise of many footsteps above denoted that the other Malays were aboard, Brenton resolved to work quickly.

He therefore picked up the senseless Malay and launched him headlong through the cabin-window into the sea.

(To be continued.)



[BEARDING THE LION.]

MAURICE DURANT.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

You could do all things but be good

Or chaste of men,

And that you would not if you could,

We know, Faustine.

Scinburna.

BRIGHT December. That is, bright in the country, with the trees and the meadows clothed in spotless robes of glittering snow, and the streams turned to still threads of silver; but dull, grim, and doleful in town, with the pavements and roads sloppy with the slush that penetrates the thickest boots, and makes the best-tempered man morose.

Particularly dull, grim, and dirty in the region of Hatton Garden, where the filthy gutters are reeking with half-melted snow and accumulated drainage; the houses grimmer in the bitter winter time, when the stark wolf Hunger is fiercer and more insatiable.

Most particularly grim and miserable in the bar of the dirty, low-browed public-house at the bottom of the dark alley, for the sawdust grates beneath the cold, uncertain tread like snow-drift, and the counter feels cold as a corpse's forehead when your fingers touch it.

Seated in the little parlour, through which, about two summers ago, the four men had passed to the underground kitchen to plot the attack on the Rectory, sat a man and a woman.

The man was Spazzola, sitting huddled up over the scrap of miserable fire, scratching his rage closer to him with a gesture that was eloquent of the Italian hatred for cold.

The woman we have not seen before, though we have heard of her.

Tall and well formed, she might have been—nay, she was handsome, beautiful, in her youth, though time and the vilest dissipation had thinned her straggling black hair, drink had blurred her dark eyes and drawn black hollows beneath them, and coarse rouge had left its tell-tale yellow upon her wasted cheek.

But there was a look of savage cunning in her large, dull eyes, and a determined, passionate expression in her coarse, animal mouth.

Looking at her as she leaned over the beer-stained, rickety table, her dirty hands, covered with mock jewellery of the loudest description, clasped in front of her, no one would have guessed that she had once been the beauty and the toast of Paris and the belle of half the civilized cities in the world; now she was—well, what she was—the shadow of a grand figure, the wreck of a magnificent face.

Listen, it is she who speaks.

"How long, miserable object, art thou going to sit cowering over that fire, like a lost soul in purgatory?" she asked, with a low, discordant laugh.

"As long as I will," returned Spazzola, with a snarl. "Purgatory! wouldst thou wert there."

"Not so," retorted the woman. "For then must I be where thou art eternally, and that would be purgatory ten thousand times heated."

Spazzola snarled.

"Enough, spare thy tongue its venom. Dost think to touch one already deadened to thy sting? You ask me how long I think of staying here. I tell thee till thou art tired waiting for me to go. Felise! what dost thou want? What dost thou expect? What hast thou been dogging me for? Thou shouldst know by this time that I have never a bone to spare."

"And if thou hadst I never should get it," she said, with a bitter laugh. "No, Spazzola mine, 'tis not for bones, 'tis for meat I follow."

"Meat!" he sneered, turning to the fire again and shutting it from her by his ragged cloak. "Meat! Ugh!"

"Ay, meat!" she repeated. "Spazzola, thou art a dullard; thou art like the lizard who thought to escape the hunter's eye by shamming death. Ah! ah! I know thee; I know thee. Too long hast thou had the chase to thyself; too long have gorged the plunder, while I have starved in the cold."

"Plunder! Gorged!" he snarled, rising with a contemptuous shug of his lean shoulders. "Felise, thou art a bigger idiot than I thought thee. Look at me; look at me, I ask thee. Do I look like a pampered, well-filled dog, or a lean, half-starved hound? Gorged!" he cried, with a savage laugh. "There!" flinging a few coppers upon the table, which the woman pounced on like a tiger and transferred to her pocket. "There is all my wealth, and thou hast it. Therefore, if it be that which draws thee after me step by step the magnet's gone, and—"

"It is not," she laughed, sardonically. "Tis well done, Spazzola. I see thou hast lost none of thy craft. Thou art the same fair-faced hypocrite as in the old days when—Shah! Spazzola mine; they are as unsavoury to me as thee. But thou art the same, unaltered—save for being uglier—like myself," she added, quickly and carelessly, as he turned with a significant grin. "Quite the same cheating fox!"

He sprang to his feet at the scornful words, but she, nothing daunted, laughed tauntingly, and struck her glass on the table.

"Empty—like thyself, my Spazzola—all air, empty air, and no liquor. Come, we will fill both of them at thy expense, and then to business."

"Business!" he snarled, sinking into his seat as at the answer to her summons a dirty-looking girl entered, and filled the glasses from a long-necked Rhine flagon.

"Ay! business," she repeated. "Thou saidst I had watched; dost think I watch for nothing? Shah! Thou art not so great an idiot. I have watched and seen; thou hast some game on hand; thou hold'st winning cards. Soh! I will see the cards, and wait also. I will! And when I say I will it is useless for thee to say 'thou wilt not'—that thou knowest. Come, leave the fire, and bare that honest breast of thine that I may see the secret there. Come! show the cards."

"I have none to show," he snarled, cowering still closer to the fire.

Her eyes flashed for a moment, and the soiled fingers tightened round the thick stem of the glass.

"Idiot!" she hissed, leaning over the table till her wine-stained breath came hotly against his hair. "Idiot! Wilt thou leave me to find it out and take my own and thy share too? Idiot! Am I blind, thinkest thou, or as great a dolt as thyself that thou hug'st thyself with the belief that I do not know that thou hast found him!"

"Tis false!" he hissed, turning so sharply round that his blazing eyes met hers point blank.

"Tis true!" she hissed, in return, her clenched hand trembling with passion. "You have found him."

"And if I have?" he snarled, rising and striking the table with his clenched hand. "What is that to thee? Get thee back to thy den in Paris, in Venice, anywhere but here. Thou shalt not touch the game, I have sworn it."

She tossed down the wine and leered up at him.

His passion grew in intensity beneath her mocking gaze until the veins stood out black and cord-like upon his swarthy forehead.

"Soh!" she hissed, in a soft, snake-like tone. "Felise is to be robbed twice of that which is hers by right! Spazzola is to snare the game marked with her brand long since, and she is not to touch, not to lay so much as a finger on it. She is to be the cat-paw for the monkey, Spazzola! Shah! Idiot, ten thousand times idiot! I tell you I have found him already—"

He sprang forward and grasped her arm, his face working like a demon's, his breath coming in thick, quick gasps.

"I have him as surely as thou. Shall I tell thee where the game lies—"

Here she dropped her voice and whispered a word. He started, and stood with folded arms and averted, flashing eyes.

Five minutes passed, the woman looking up at him with a low look of triumphant cunning, then, with a scornful voice, she said:

"Well, is it to be war or peace? Do we work together, my Spazzola, or separately?"

He sank into the chair, and fixed his black eyes upon her searchingly.

"Thou wilt not play me false?" he said, in a low voice.

"I follow thee," she said, with a significant look. He held out his hand.

"Good. Thou wilt leave everything to me and take thy fair half?"

"Thou shalt earn it all, and I will be satisfied with half, Spazzola mine," she grinned, grasping his hand.

"Good," he said, knocking the table. "Now to seal the bond. More wine!"

A bottle was brought, the woman snatched at it eagerly, and filled her glass—drained it and filled it, drained it, filled again, and again, and again—her companion seemingly drinking as hard, though really careful never to fill his glass, but talking and pushing the bottle continually.

Presently the woman's voice grew thicker, huskier, until it was unintelligible; then, when the bottle was nearly emptied, the glass dropped from her hand, her head fell upon her arms, and she fell into a stertorous sleep.

Spazzola sprang to his feet like a cat, and leaping across the table he drew a long shining stiletto from beneath his cape.

It flashed in the air for one second, then dropped to his side as he hissed:

"Not yet! Not yet!"

Had that foot of steel been buried in the neck of the sleeping woman how much trouble, how much agony, would have been spared Maurice Durant and those he loved!

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Where, when the gods would be cruel,
Do they go for a torture? where
Plant thorns, set pain and a jewel?
Ah! not in the flesh, not there!
The ricks of earth and the roils
Are weak as foam on the sands;
In the heart is the prey for gods;
Who crucify hearts, not hands.

Swainsburne.

LADY CROWNBRILLIANTS sat in her luxurious easy-chair in the crimson drawing room of the Rectory.

The bright fire burning in the polished stove lit up her lovely face and the handsome one of Chudleigh Chichester beside her with a rich red glow only wanting to make her sweet, pale countenance perfect.

"Well, Carlotta," he said, rather impatiently toying with her white hand on which the wedding-ring was surmounted by a deep mourning one set in brilliants. "Well," he repeated, "what's the answer? Yes or no? Let it be yes, my darling."

She plucked and plucked the crape of her dress nervously.

"It is as soon yet—"

"Soon! It seems an age to me," he replied. "Think how long I have waited—how patiently! Ah, Carlotta, if you knew how I thirsted to call you mine—mine—my own—you would not put me off. I can do nothing, think of nothing, while you are still buried here in this hateful place."

"Hateful place!" she repeated.

"Ay, hateful, for was it not his?"

She bowed her head in her hands.

"How soon did you say?" she said, faintly.

"A month," he repeated, "March. Even that seems a long time for me to wait. March. Come, Carlotta, say yes, that I may go up to town glad and light of heart to make the preparations. Ah, my darling, my poor darling, if you knew how my life is buried in you, how I lay my ambition, my hopes, my future at your feet, you would not hesitate!"

"I—I do not," she replied. "March! Only another month!" she repeated, gazing into the fire.

"Yes," he repeated, "only another month," his eager hand caressing her, his eyes fastened on her face. "Say yes."

"Yes," she answered, obediently, turning her lovely eyes to his and laying her glorious head upon his breast.

Of course the county was somewhat shocked—or professed to be—it always does. Lord Crownbrilliant was scarcely cold they averred, and quoted with upraised eyes the lines from Hamlet about the funeral menses setting forth the marriage feast.

But Chudleigh cared not for the county, and Sir Fielding, who did not study it very much, decided to have a grand wedding and give a ball in the evening at the Hall.

The county having a weakness for grand weddings

and balls, immediately veered round and praised the match and the bridegroom elect sky high.

The day drew near; preparations had been made on an extensive scale, and the Hall was a gorgeous interior of crimson velvet, choice flowers, and festive decorations.

The little church had been festooned with hot-house flowers by Maud; and Maurice Durant had offered to officiate.

This was the most enticing line of the programme, for the Rector of Grassmere had become a popular man, and everybody was eager to see and to hear him, all the more so that the story of his past unknown sorrow had spread far and wide.

Lady Crownbrilliant had fixed upon Florence as the place at which to spend the honeymoon, and Chudleigh had sent a courier out to hire a pretty villa.

Sir Fielding, who was delighted at the match, and the happy glow that had suddenly sprung to Chudleigh's face, purchased a magnificent set of pearls as a wedding present, and Maud had procured a magnificent bracelet of emeralds and brilliants.

Maurice Durant contributed a tiara fit for a princess, and the other bridal gifts were little less magnificent.

Altogether it promised to be a grand wedding, and when the sun rose with summer brightness on the morning the invited guests did not forget to quote the old adage "Happy is the bride," etc., as they thronged to the little church in all the majesty of lavender silks and satins.

The church was full, every seat occupied, the aisle lined with titled ladies and exquisitely dressed gentlemen.

The organ, played by an organist Maurice Durant had procured from London, rolled out grand hymns of praise, and Chudleigh Chichester appeared and walked to the altar to wait for his bride.

A happy flush was on his brow, and a bright, joyous light in his eyes, and several who had witnessed the wedding of two years back whispered to each other how differently the bridegroom looked, and as Carlotta appeared, followed by the beautiful Maud and the other bridesmaids, how differently the bride!

Then Maurice Durant commenced the service, his grand, ringing voice repeating the old, old, familiar words with a music in it that lent it a new and solemn meaning.

In a perfectly audible voice Chudleigh made the responses, Carlotta in softer tones, a hymn was sung, the organ pealed out a fresh, and the wedding was over.

There was a crowd outside the church, and both bride and bridegroom as they entered their carriage were lustily cheered; as were also the company and Sir Fielding—who looked ten years younger, so an old peasant said—in his old-fashioned blue coat and diamond adorned ruffles.

There was a magnificent breakfast at the Hall, the usual speeches—a good one from Chudleigh, the usual commonplace yet not unwelcome ones of the old people, who always will speak at wedding breakfasts, a tearful, quiet one from Sir Fielding, and then the happy couple departed followed by Sir Fielding's blessing and a shower of white slippers.

Then the guests strolled about the grounds, played billiards, gathered around Maurice Durant at the great organ in the gallery and otherwise amused themselves until six, when a dinner as magnificent as the breakfast was laid out in the banquetting-hall.

After dinner—it was March, and the doors shut—preparations were made for the ball, more guests arrived, the hum of tongues, unloosed by expectation, filled the old place, and the ladies were in their glory.

At eight o'clock the band struck up the first quadrille and the ball commenced.

Maurice Durant, who of course did not dance, now stole a quiet minute or two with Maud, and seated by her side in the conservatory listened to the strains of the music and reminded her that it was at a ball he had first called her his own.

While she with a smile clung to his great, broad chest and was happy in his happiness.

Later on, when a break occurred, Sir Fielding sought him out and begged him to play, and he went and enthralled every soul present with a burst of joyous music that was but the outpouring of his own glad heart.

So the ball went on, merry laughter ringing through the old Hall, joyous music floating through the stained windows, and shutting out the storm which was raging over the moor and through the trees.

While Maurice Durant's voice was ringing through the church in the marriage service the landlord of the little hostel at which years ago he had left the mastiff Tigris, was sitting at his door very much as he had sat when Maurice Durant had found him on his return.

He had heard of the wedding and was wondering

whether he really could distinguish the Grassmere bells or it was only his fancy deceiving him when a woman soiled with the dust and blown by the March winds came in sight, and walking up to him sat herself down on the bench at his side.

"Good-day, madam," said Gregory.

She gave him a good-day in answer and asked for a glass of beer.

The landlord asked her to walk in, but in a dull, tired sort of way she shook her head and leant back wearily against the seat.

Gregory brought the ale and setting it down in front of her returned to his seat, thinking that he had heard the voice before, and watching her as she emptied the glass, wondered where.

But suddenly as she looked up and told him to fill it again it flashed across him that the tones of her voice were like those of the man from whom he every three months received a certain sum of money, and, astonished at the resemblance, he got up, and after filling the glass observed "that it was a fine day for such an early month."

"Fine enough," replied the woman, curtly, and then, drinking the liquor, relapsed into her old attitude.

Presently the clock struck the hour, and, turning her dust-stained face to the window, she rose and asked how far it was to Grassmere.

"Sixteen miles by the road," replied the landlord.

"A long way," said the woman, with a strong foreign accent.

"It is a good pull," he assented. "Were you thinking of going that way?"

She nodded. "Yes."

Gregory looked at her old, dust-stained boots and then at her weary face.

"If so be as you're not in a particular hurry," he said, slowly, "I've got a cart going to the 'Box and Grapes,' just outside the village. I'd be glad to give you a lift if you'd accept of it."

She looked at him "stupid-like," as he afterwards expressed it, and asked him when it started.

"Well, it ain't going till the morning," he replied.

"But that don't matter. The missus will find you a bed and bit o' sup, and you can take a rest awhile."

She shook her head and said:

"No, no; I must be there to-night. Sixteen miles, say you?"

"A full sixteen miles," replied the man, "and uphill."

She walked into the road and looked up it, then came back.

"There's a wedding—a marriage there to-day, is there not? I heard some people talking—"

"I should think there be," said Gregory, scratching his head.

"A grand one?" she said, her face lighting up with a strange smile, and her thin, dusty hands pulling her shawl tightly around her.

"A rare grand one," replied the man. "If you're determined to go on to-night maybe you'll see the end o' the ball. There's fine doings up at the Hall—fine doings. Why, the whole county's been a-talkin' of it for the last month past."

She nodded quickly once or twice, then, putting down upon the table the price of the beer she had drunk, without a word walked away.

After a few steps she stopped and came back.

"Are there any wine-shops on the way?—what do you call them—public-houses, inns?"

"Ah—ay, there's a few," replied Gregory.

There's the 'Grape and Nettle' near upon a mile ahead, the 'Seven Stars,' and the 'Chichester Head' at the brow of the hill."

The woman nodded with the same quick, foreign gesture as before, and walked on. This time she did not return.

Later on in the evening when the storm had commenced the landlord, who had betaken himself to his parlour fireside, and sat wondering whether his strange customer had reached some sort of shelter from the pitiless rain and the furious wind, when there came a knocking at the door, and a man's voice was heard shouting for admittance.

Gregory started to his feet.

"Who can that be?" he said. "A stranger, or he'd know how to lift the latch. Sit ye still, wife, and let me go."

Opening the door, he saw a tall, dark-looking man, pressed close up against the porch in a vain attempt to screen himself from the blast.

Directly the door was opened far enough he slipped in, and, turning fiercely upon the landlord, exclaimed:

"Went asleep, dog, that thou didst not hear me knock? Are all your customers left to be blown to perdition in your doorway? 'Tis courteous and hostly."

Gregory started and was speechless.

This man's voice was the same as the woman's who had just left.

"Ah! deaf, dumb, blind, idiot!" snarled the man, throwing off his large cloak and striding into the parlour, but pulling off his soft-brimmed hat with a surly sort of politeness to the landlady by the fire.

"Good-evening, mistress, if you can call such scoldish weather good. It is the fiend's own I think. Your husband seems deaf or dumb. Can you give me some wine?"

Gregory, still speechless, reached down a bottle and placed it with a wine-glass on the table.

The traveller flung himself into a chair, and, throwing his cloak on the ground before the fire, filled his glass and emptied it.

The landlady, now somewhat recovered from his astonishment, said meekly that it was a wet night.

The traveller did not seem to hear him, but sat staring moodily at the fire, every now and then filling his glass—which he always emptied at a single gulp.

Presently, with a suddenness that made the pair jump, he strode to the window and forcing it open gazed out upon the rain.

Then he turned and asked how far it was to Grassmere.

Again the landlady started and lost his tongue, but, fearing another outbreak on the part of the traveller, his wife replied:

"Sixteen miles."

The man started.

"Sixteen miles!" he repeated. "The saints!" then walked quickly to the table, emptied the bottle, picked up his coat, threw down a coin and walked to the door.

Suddenly he stopped and entered the room again.

"Are there any drinking-shops, man, on this hateful road?"

The colour forsook the landlady's face.

"Y-e-s," he managed to jerk out, and then stopped.

The traveller scowled fiercely and strode out of the bar, swinging the door behind him with a loud crash.

The ball was at its height, the guests, heated and flushed with pleasure, were dancing in the ball-room or promading through the gallery and conservatories.

A waltz was just finished and the refreshment corner of the room was crowded.

Maud had just been dancing with a younger son of Lord Housdon and was listening to his rather round-about description of the "best run of the season," when Maurice Durant came up with a lady on his arm, for whom he had been procuring some refreshment.

The four sat down together in a cool corner, and Maurice, seizing the opportunity, managed to smuggle Maud off into the picture gallery.

"Well, cara mia," he said, tenderly, drawing her towards him, "are you not tired?"

"No," she said, "women never get tired of two things you know."

"What are they?" he asked, with a smile.

"Love and dancing," she replied, with a blush.

"But you must be very weary," she said, looking up into his face. "You have not danced at all, but you have been working so hard to make every one happy."

"Weary?" he said—"not one whit. Had any one told me a year ago, birdie, that I could have worn the cap and bells and danced the waltz with so good a grace I should have laughed them to scorn."

"That is past now," whispered Maud, caressing his hand.

"Ay, thank Heaven," he said, throwing back his head. "Past! Little one, some day in the future when the vanished years have grown dim and indistinct, I will tear away the veil and let you see how grim and black the prospect is!"

"Why should you?" she murmured. "I can trust—nay, I do; to hear of your sorrow and suffering would pain me, and pain you too in the telling. Let it go by—let the veil fall thicker and thicker every year until it blots it out altogether."

"My angel," he murmured, pressing her closer to him.

"Where's Chudleigh now?" she said, presently.

"Far on the road to happiness," he answered, with a low laugh. "Poor fellow—he waited long and, patiently, he was going to add, but stopped and said, instead, 'Maudie, mine, how soon will you make me happy as her ladyship has done your Chud?'"

She blushed and stole closer, till her face was hidden against his breast.

"In the summer, little one?" he went on, his voice dropping to a soft, sweet murmur, and using the words "thee and thine" unconsciously. "Early in the summer, my darling? when the blossoms are thick and the flowers lift their heads toward the sun. Tell me, Maud, wilt thou give thyself to me?—give thyself to warm and colour my life? Wilt thou come to turn the old gray, desolate Rectory to a love-cottage,

shining in it and on me as the sun shines in the wilderness and in the woods? Tell me, little one, that when the birds sing again I may take thee, the sweetest of them all, to my heart to rest for evermore."

At that moment the band commenced the next dance, and Maud started.

"I am engaged for this to Sir Charles Warton," she said, rather sorrowfully. "I wonder whether he will find me," she added, hoping that he would not.

But her wishes were disappointed, for Sir Charles Warton entered the gallery in search of her and hurried her off.

Maurice Durant, left alone, strolled to one of the windows, and, unfastening it, looked out upon the night.

It was as dark as pitch, and the swift blast dashed the rain in his face.

"Storm without, peace within," he murmured, with a happy sigh. "Heaven pity the traveller to-night," he added, thoughtfully, turning from the window.

As he stepped into the light a footman, who had been looking up and down the gallery, came to him quickly, and said:

"You are wanted, sir, in the hall."

"I?" said Maurice Durant, tapping his breast with astonishment.

"Yes, sir; the person asked for you!"

"Are you sure?" said Maurice Durant, wondering who it could be.

"Certain, sir."

Maurice Durant, humming lightly, strode down the broad stairs and entered the hall.

No one was there.

He was about to call to the footman, when a dark shadow in the corner made him almost start, and he advanced.

As he approached it turned into a woman, with its face full up against the light.

Maurice Durant looked for an instant with a dead, stony gaze, then sprang forward with a fearful suppressed cry, and, clutching its wet arm, round which the drenched shawl clung limply, gazed down with clenched teeth at the bloated, dissipated face, then threw up his arms and reeled against the wall.

For a minute the woman, who was half dead with drink and fatigue, stared at him with senseless, idiotic gaze, then rolled forward and touched his arm.

He started as if a serpent had stung him, looked round the hall with bloodshot eyes, then, bending forward, stole to the door, opened it, and beckoned to the woman, hissing:

"One word and I strangle you on the spot."

She nodded her head, and with uncertain steps followed him.

He closed the door noiselessly, and, beckoning her still, strode on, the heavy rain pouring down upon his bare head, and spaking through his thin evening dress.

Twenty minutes afterwards the shadow of Maurice Durant's former self stole up the stairs he had so short a time since run down so lightly. His drenched clothes clung to his frozen form, his face was white and set like a dead man's, the lips livid and bleeding, and his eyes as bloodshot as a drunken man's.

Slowly, as if each step cost him pain, he gained the gallery, and there, panting and quivering, stood listening to the music as a lost soul in torment might strain to catch the angelic melody streaming from the gates of the Paradise from which he was eternally banished.

The music ceased.

The light forms of the dancers passed him as he shrank into a dark corner—passed and were gone.

Yet one more came—the woman he loved.

His clenched teeth bit deeper into the livid lips till the blood dropped on to his shirt front and down his hands; his clasped hands pressed harder against his heart.

Yet he spoke not a word, though "Maud! Maud!" seemed falling from the sky, shrieking from the floor, waiving from every side of the gallery.

He almost fancied he had called her, but no, she looked round the gallery with a troubled, wistful gaze and passed on.

He watched her thirstily till the last scrap of her gay dress was lost, and then stole out and noiselessly gaining the higher stairs entered his room, a spacious apartment handsomely furnished, as befitted a guest who had wrought the Hall so much good.

Going to the window, he threw it open and thrust his face out into the driving rain that beat upon it as it beat upon the senseless oaks around the Rectory.

Half an hour passed, then he left the window and walking to a bureau at the end of the room opened one of its drawers.

A pile of bank notes lay coiled up in one corner.

These he thrust into his breast—then pulled open another drawer and drew out a revolver.

As his hand clasped the cold stock for the first

time his face changed and his eyes fell upon it with a greedy, wistful expression.

He laid it down on the table and walked to the window, but he could not take his eyes from it, and gradually, step by step, returned to the table and picked the weapon up again.

With calm deliberation he looked at the priming.

It was loaded.

He cocked it, and then turned it over and over mechanically.

The barrel was pointed to his head. His finger trembled.

Another moment—another movement—and his soul would have sped to its account, but before the movement came the music burst out again, and his hand fell to his side and with a start he laid the weapon on the table. For a few minutes he stood listening to the waltz, then opened the door of the other room, and in five minutes returned to the first, attired in his old rough shooting-suit, with his gun in his hand and his cloak over his arm.

Then, extinguishing the light, he stole down by a back staircase and gained the terrace.

The stables lay beyond this, and he must reach them unseen.

Waiting for a few minutes in the pitch darkness, he crept along out of the reach of the lights from the window and got to the stables unseen.

Forcing open one of the doors, he took down a lighted lantern from a hook and saddled one of the horses. Then he stole round to the small pent-house at the back that had been erected over a kennel.

As his footsteps approached it the dog Tigris sprang out with a whine of recognition, but a whispered word quieted it, and it stood as still as a stone while its master unfastened its chain, and followed upon his footsteps like a panther as if it knew—as it assuredly did—that secrecy was required.

Replacing the lantern, and leading the horse out, Maurice Durant gave a low call to the dog, vaulted into the saddle, and rode off across the meadow toward the high road, the pelting rain beating upon his white, death-like face as if it meant to tear it to pieces.

(To be continued.)

THE FORTUNES OF BRAMBLETHORPE.

CHAPTER XIV.

ESTELLE loved Lord Harry with a passion that was true to her peculiar nature. She loved him selfishly, fiercely, jealously, with a mad, undisciplined feeling which would injure him as quickly as serve him if he slighted or thwarted her. It was this passionate jealousy which had led her to entice his father into a marriage even more than her resolve to attain the coronet. If Lord Harry despised her she would make him feel her revenge.

This feeling was just as strong in her as ever. It had induced her to lay all her plans to betray to the world the earl's secret, should Lord Harry still persist in his indifference.

But of late he had been so considerate of her, so attentive and gentle, that her fierce heart had melted into a tender glow. All her bad purposes were fading out. She had felt quite willing to wait the effects of time, for there was no rival near to awaken apprehension—Lord Harry's mourning kept him out of society, and she had the field entirely to herself.

Now this chance revelation of Lady Augusta's, that Agnes MacLeod was not married, disturbed all this quiet confidence. It set her brooding over her old schemes, and making burning resolutions to accomplish her own desires, even against this powerful influence.

All her calmness was changed into trepidation. She felt as certain as of her own existence that if Lord Harry should learn the truth he would post to Scotland and bring back the wife whom so many wise people were advising him to secure.

Consequently she felt anxious to bring matters to such a crisis that he would not be free to seek Agnes.

"Did I not hear Harry say that the captain and his wife were coming here before long?" she asked, as they laid aside their sewing to dress for dinner.

"They are expected to-morrow, I believe. Uncle wishes to come for the autumn shooting. I should think he ought to give it up, out of respect to papa's memory; but he is just as eager after pleasure as ever," answered Augusta, with some indignation.

"He has not had a season in England for so many years, and will not have again for many more—I daresay that is the reason," said Estelle, apologetically.

She wanted the captain on hand, and therefore made an excuse for him.

"I am sure we ought to be glad to have uncle here

"It is dreadfully lonely!" remarked Clara, when, an hour later, they descended to the solitary dining-room.

There was their brother, grave and preoccupied, at the head of the table—no one else—and a solemn quartette they made of it.

Mr. Douglass, who had been with them a good deal, was at present away on his own estates, busied with arranging for his approaching marriage.

"Yes," said Lord Harry, "I am glad he is coming here. It is not well for you girls to shut yourselves up so much. Every one of you looks pale. I must insist on your at least riding or driving out every day. The weather is beautiful now—cool, clear, and bracing. At least, it is your duty to care for your health."

He looked at Estelle as he spoke.

She was pale, and her countenance wore a most melancholy expression. He was very attentive in urging her to eat, seeing that she scarcely touched the viands which were placed one after another in tempting succession before her. She smiled faintly in gratitude, trying to coax her appetite to please him, while he made a great effort to be cheerful for her sake and that of his sisters.

After dinner the ladies threw wraps about them and went to walk in the grounds, at Harry's suggestion, who accompanied them.

It was a fine September evening, the sun just setting in a violet haze, the air crisp and frosty.

They wandered through the gardens where many of the gorgeous flowers were yet in bloom; and on down to the little lake behind the rose garden.

Estelle walked so feebly that Lord Harry offered her his arm; but Augusta got talking with Clara about Mr. Douglass, and strolled on and on with her young sister, so interested that they did not observe how the other couple lagged behind.

As they came opposite a seat near the water's edge Estelle sighed so wearily that her companion proposed that she should sit for a few moments and rest.

She complied, and he sat beside her. Both looked away in silence at the purple and golden band which lay along the West, and at the pink flush reflected in the silvery lake.

The silence lasted so long that Lord Harry turned and looked in the face of the girl beside him.

Her eyes were fixed on the distance, and two large tears stood on her cheeks.

"Estelle," he said, kindly, "why do you grieve so much?"

She turned her dark, brimming eyes upon his, letting them slowly sink, as she faltered:

"I have lost the best, most generous friend that I ever had. But it is not that alone which wears upon me so."

"What is it then, Estelle?"

He asked the question impulsively, without reflecting upon the advantage she might take of it to introduce a disagreeable subject. His wit came to him a moment too late.

"It kills me to feel how you must think of me," she said, in a low, intense voice. "I can never forget that evening in which I betrayed to you the bad side of my character—on which I went to your father and got him to think I cared for him—to be—revenged on you! It was so wicked! And it seems to me so dreadful now that it has all ended as it has. But indeed, indeed, I would have made a good and faithful wife to him. He should never have known but that I loved him. I never could have loved any man after—after—"

Here she faltered and paused entirely.

"And so," she began again, when she had mastered her confusion, "I thought I might as well live with the earl as any one. I meant to be good to him. Oh, Harry, I am not so bad as I made myself out then! I was wild with jealousy and—despair. I want you to forget it, if you can, and to believe that I really am trying to govern myself, and to live down that passionate, impulsive part of my nature which has made me do so many rash things."

She looked up so humbly, while two more tears brimmed over, following those which had gone before, that Lord Harry really pitied her, wishing that she had not humiliated herself to confess to him, and that she were not so fond of him—"Poor child, she had begun to love him when she was so young—they had been so much together—perhaps she was not so much to blame!"

Such sentiments as these softened his judgment as he saw the tears sparkle down their channel, and the lips quiver.

He would have been a colder man than he was if he had refused her some token of his present kind feeling. He took the little hand lying nervelessly by her side, pressing it, and even raising it to his lips, as he said:

"Don't cry, Estelle. And do not confess to me. I assure you, if you wish it, the past shall be forgot-

ten. I am glad that you are trying to govern yourself. You are too impulsive, Estelle, for a woman and a lady; but, poor child, you had no mother when you were growing up. You will be the best little girl that ever was if you correct that fault. And you will be happy, some day, too. It is not natural, at your age, to remain sorrowful a great length of time. The right man will be sure to come, some time, and then you will fall in love with him, and laugh at the past, and thank your stars that you were free to accept him. Is not that a goodly prophecy?"

Estelle looked up at him with a sad, quivering smile.

"You think so. But you shall see. I can live without love. All romance is at an end with me, Harry. I shall stay with papa—and perhaps, after all, he needs me more than any one else."

Estelle appeared almost nun-like under the influence of this resolution and in her plain black garments.

Her companion felt his respect as well as his admiration on the increase.

And true it is that, at that hour, there entered into his heart the possibility that he might yet make that sad-faced girl his wife.

For her sake. She loved him, undoubtedly. While, as for himself, all thought of love for any woman lay dead since the day on which he had passed Agnes on her way to church with MacLeod of Melrose.

Since that day he had felt chilled and tired—looking forward to the long future as to a dull, monotonous path to be trodden without interest or joy. In this magic moment a warmer thrill ran through him from the little hand which he caressed, and the idea suggested itself that if he had lost happiness he might yet confer it upon another.

It was but a little seed, which sank into the darkness, and lay there without making a sign.

But Estelle, had she known that it had fallen into prepared ground, would have waited in rich contentment for the day when it would burst its sheath and grow into expression.

As it was, she hoped.

Certainly there was no repulsion in the hand which pressed her own.

He no longer disliked her, and that was a great gain.

She was quite ready to return to the house when the sisters rejoined them, feeling that she had accomplished a master-task in saying so much to him and yet not offending him.

The following day, with a great bustle, which changed the Villa from a house of mourning into a Good Fellows' Hall, arrived the captain. He went through the place like a gust of wind. Doors banged, servants ran, dogs and horses stirred with a premonition of the work before them.

"I've come down for a good time," he said, jollily, to the master of the house. "I don't expect you to join in, Harry—of course not. But I shan't have another run with the hounds in ten years, and I cannot be cheated out of it. I feel grieved—you know I do, nephew, very grieved! I liked my brother. But if I should shut myself up and mope as you do, it would kill me. My constitution wouldn't bear it. You've no objections to my joining the county gentlemen in their sports?"

"No, uncle. I know this is your only visit to England for some time. I hope you will enjoy yourself in your own way. Only so that you do not ask me to join you, you are welcome to my stable and kennels and shooting-grounds."

"Thanks! and now I must let Sir Howard know of my arrival. Bless you, we were boys together. He'll have me over there immediately, I know. We've been in at the death together many a time. Is he as fond of the field as he used to be?"

"I believe so, uncle."

"Good. Then I'm provided for. How long before dinner, Harry?—the journey has made me as hungry as a bear."

"There's the dressing-bell now, uncle."

Meantime, in the room upstairs, the young ladies were hanging about Mrs. Captain De Vere, kissing her and crying bitterly, for the sight of her brought back afresh the memory of the sad scenes through which they had recently passed.

When they were summoned to dinner the aunt came down in her travelling dress and with red eyes, for she had been too much engaged with her nieces to get her dress changed.

Their eyes, too, were red, and their sweet faces full of sadness.

"Deuce take it," muttered the captain under his breath.

It irritated him to see melancholy countenances when he wanted to enjoy himself.

Estelle, who sat next to him, heard the exclamation and comprehended the cause of his annoyance; she made a subdued effort to converse with him on

his favourite topics, telling him that she had heard Sir Howard Bolling express great satisfaction at the prospect of meeting his old friend and rival in the hunt, Captain De Vere.

"A deuced fine girl; I don't wonder my brother struck his colours to her," thought the captain, and before long he was telling her about hunting in India, and what sort of game they had there, and how tiger-hunting was as much more exciting than fox-hunting as could be imagined.

To all of which Estelle listened with deep interest, and was rewarded, somewhat later, by hearing the captain remark to Lord Harry, as they lighted their cigars outside the library window, that, "Miss Styles was a clever woman and would make a jolly wife for some fellow yet."

The next day the captain made his selection of a horse and dogs and rode over to Sir Howard's, not making his appearance again until dinner had waited for him a little time.

He vowed he had enjoyed a tip-top day, and was as hungry as a Bengal tiger.

There was one person who did not like the rapidity with which the rector's daughter re-established her at-home habits in the Villa—that person was Perkins, the housekeeper.

She did not like Estelle. She never would like her.

In her own mind she always dubbed her "that snake in the grass."

Especially since she had seen her steal out of the earl's room that afternoon in May had she despised and distrusted her.

With a sharpness which women of her class often possess she penetrated the hidden motives of the young lady, and hated her for them.

It had been a great effort for her to restrain herself from remonstrating with the earl when the news of his intended marriage reached her ears.

Now she resolved that Estelle should never reach the object of her ambition—never marry the young earl—never wear the Bramblethorpe coronet.

She resolved it, and set her teeth on the resolve; and yet if one had inquired how she expected to prevent it she would have been puzzled for an answer.

She would watch and she would wait.

Above all, she would keep up a search for that stolen packet.

Many and many a time she examined every box and drawer in the bed-chamber which was kept for Estelle.

Yet she scarcely expected to find there the object of her search.

Of course the thief had taken the packet home, and it must be there, if it had not been placed in outside hands.

So Perkins became very friendly with Dora, and once she walked over to the Rectory, when she knew that maid and mistress were both at the Villa, and inquired for Dora.

The servants did not know where Dora was to be found; so the housekeeper remarked that she had a lace collar of Miss Estelle's, and she would take it up to her room and wait a bit.

So respectable a person as the housekeeper at the Villa, where all things were under her charge, was at perfect liberty to go up to Miss Styles's room. When she got there she looked well about her.

Her eyes fell on the writing-desk.

"It is there," she said.

Then she listened at the door to make sure that no one was coming, and, seizing the desk, sat down near the door on the carpet, that she might hear any chance comer in time to put away the article before discovered in her singular occupation—singular for an honest woman like Perkins.

The desk was locked.

Never mind, she had a pocketful of keys, some of them very small.

She selected half a dozen of the tiniest—one of them fitted. The desk was open in her lap.

What then?

She had no clear idea of what she was looking for, except that it was a small package of papers.

With trembling hands she turned over the contents of the desk.

There were a few notes and letters, and a good assortment of ladies' stationery—nothing in the earl's handwriting—nothing about the earl—nothing with a lawyer's seal or musty and old-looking.

There was a torn sheet of note-paper on which Estelle had scribbled many times:

"I love you, Lord Harry; I love you, Lord Harry," and "Estelle, Countess of Bramblethorpe; Estelle, Countess of Bramblethorpe."

A grim smile crossed Perkins's face as she read this. But she was in haste and could not take time to be as scornful over it as she otherwise would have been. She only murmured to herself:

"Not so sure, miss; not so sure."

She did wish that she knew exactly what the papers were, so that she should make no mistake. However, she saw nothing here of a suspicious nature, and at last she closed and re-looked the little desk. No one coming she took a hurried look through Estelle's bureau drawers. And still her eyes kept turning to the writing-desk. There was a magnetism about it. She felt, as the children say in their game of hide-and-seek, "cold" when she went away from it, "hot" when she approached it. She had her long walk and, what was worse to her, had done a mean act without effecting the least thing.

As she had come, by an obscure path through the woods and fields, she had encountered Lord Harry, sitting dreamily beside the lake, watching the line which he held motionless over the gray water.

It was a cloudy afternoon, with occasional drops of water—a good day for fishing.

She stopped near him, hesitating. He might be having a bite and would be annoyed if she spoke and startled the fish. Yet the opportunity was too good to be slighted.

"My lord," she began, "excuse me if I scare the trout, and so vex you, but I've got it on my mind that I would like a description of the papers your father, the earl, had stolen from him. It worries me, night and day, that does, and I've thought, perhaps, if I knew just what they were, I might some day come across 'em. Leastways, I could be on the look-out."

Lord Harry jerked the line out of the water, laying the rod down by his side.

He had lately thought little of the lost letters, and the matter came back to him most unpleasantly. He wished that he had never spoken of them to the housekeeper, faithful as he knew her to be. Now that he was growing to think better of Estelle, and to believe that she repented of her past follies, it disturbed him to remember that Perkins had seen her coming from his father's room—as she had.

It reminded him, however, of what he had recently resolved to do—to ask Estelle to give up to him the papers which she had admitted a knowledge of.

"I do not know, myself, what they were, Perkins, except that they were three letters, and that their loss troubled my father exceedingly. To whom they were addressed or who wrote them he never told me. I hope, now, that their loss is nothing serious. I thank you for your interest, Mrs. Perkins; but you must not allow the matter to trouble you. You had best hurry towards the house—it is going to rain."

"I will, my lord; but let me say just one word: if you can get them letters, get 'em, they're better in your hands than in here—and she's got 'em!"

"He wants to shield her ready," she muttered as she passed on; "that's a bad sign. She pulling the wool over his eyes—and he used to read her plain as a book. Well, she can't blind me."

Large drops began to patter down on the rustling October leaves—a melancholy autumn rain was setting in.

Lord Harry gathered up his fishing-tackle and went rapidly towards the house.

He was vexed with Perkins; and yet he was glad that she had reminded him of his intention to ask Estelle all about these papers.

He would do it kindly, and not at all as if she were at fault about them.

He would ask what they were, and if she knew in whose hands they were, and if she could be the instrument of returning them to him.

"She will hardly refuse me," he thought. "She loves me and will do as I ask her."

Ay, so she would have done had he also loved her. But to give up the instrument by which she held a certain power over him, while still so uncertain of his feelings, this Estelle was far too prudent to do.

It happened that evening that he had no opportunity of carrying out his design.

The captain captured Estelle immediately after dinner, and kept her at the chess-table the whole of the evening.

"To-morrow will do as well, surely there is no haste," thought the young man, dropping the matter from his mind; "to-morrow, if this storm ceases, we are all going to London together. I will wait till we come back."

Before the family retired that evening there was a discussion about the weather, and it was agreed that if the rain ceased by nine o'clock next morning, the young people should go up to town, as had been arranged.

Lord Harry had business, while his sisters were almost compelled to go in town to shop for the approaching wedding.

It would be necessary to spend one night, if not two, in London.

Their intention was to stop at an hotel, their town house being closed, and to keep as quiet as possible.

The young ladies still felt their recent loss too keenly to care to make visits or meet indifferent acquaintances.

Clara and Estelle were going with them, not because they had anything to do, but as company for Lady Augusta, and advisers in the delightfully difficult task of shopping.

At breakfast-time it rained steadily, but shortly afterwards it cleared away; the sun shone, the earth sparkled, the wet autumn leaves glistened on the paths where they had fallen—the promise of bright weather was certain.

There was still time to make ready for the noon express, and the little party at that hour took seats in the railway carriage and were whirled off towards London.

Ladies Augusta and Clara occupied one seat. Lord Harry placed himself beside Estelle. There was no dust, the air which floated past them was sweet and fresh; but, had it been otherwise, Estelle would have been equally happy. Clouds could have cast no shadow over her sunny mood.

Lord Harry was by her side, not self-absorbed and gloomy as had been his wont, but attentive, cheerful, even tender in his demeanour.

He was constantly asking her if she was comfortable; he honoured her with his confidence by telling her of some of his plans for the management of his estates, and what he wanted to do in the House of Lords.

He was ambitious—more so than she had dreamed—and as she looked up at him while he spoke of measures which he should strive to advance, her dark eyes kindled with pride in him as well as love. A certain sharp expression, which was peculiar to her, had disappeared, and in its place came a soft and happy look.

Her cheeks were red and her lips smiling.

"Why, Estelle, I had no idea you took such an interest in politics," said her companion, observing her eager and handsome face. "Augusta cares so little for such themes. But now, I daresay, I shall talk to you until you are tired, since I find you are such a good listener."

"You can never weary me," she said, softly. "Now that I have nothing in life to live for I must occupy my mind with something, and why not with the interests of the country?"

And she sighed, but smiled again.

He took up her little gloved hand, pressing it to his lips.

"It will not be long before you have an interest in life," he said. "You are so young—life is all before you yet."

He really pitted her for loving him so much and so hopelessly—it may even have crossed his mind that some time it might become possible for him to sacrifice himself to this pity.

Whether his thoughts went so far as that or not, Estelle believed that they did, while her own kindled with triumph.

Those two hours of railway travelling were the happiest two hours of her life so far.

Beginning to hope that the man she loved might yet love her, all that was cunning and evil in her nature lay concealed.

She would scarcely have believed it of herself, in her present mood, that she had done the things which she had done.

If only Lord Harry could forget them as utterly as she did.

Their impression on him was becoming faint also. He disliked to believe evil of a woman—especially a young woman, almost a relative, and so liked by his own sisters.

He put unpleasant memories far away, and in his enthusiasm, aroused by the subjects of their conversation, he felt kindly, if not tenderly, toward his companion.

The train rolled into the great station. The party took a carriage for Regent Street. Estelle was still strangely elated, her whole being was thrilled with a keen happiness.

She felt so amiable that she even wished had she power to make little ragauffians in the streets happy. For once she felt thoroughly good, she prayed in her heart, and desired to be worthy of the man she worshipped.

She had no sarcasms to utter for the benefit of her friends. Her face wore an expression of peace—it was too bright and joyful for the mourning garments which she wore.

Lord Harry was to leave the ladies at a shop in Regent Street while he went about his own affairs. The carriage was to remain in attendance upon them, and he was to meet them at the hotel, whither they had telegraphed for rooms at six o'clock.

The vehicle paused in front of a jeweller's, where they were to see about some mourning jewellery.

Lord Harry assisted them to alight, and waited upon them into the shop.

Estelle, remembering that she was in mourning, tried not to look so bright as she crossed the pavement by his side.

Just as our party was going in another was coming out of the jeweller's. They encountered each other on the steps.

Each paused, for as they met face to face it was impossible for one to avoid the other.

The new party was but two persons—Mrs. MacLeod and her niece.

"My poor, sweet darlings!" exclaimed the elder lady, in her impulsive way. "My heart has been low with thoughts of your sorrow; it has, indeed!"

And she grasped the hands of the sisters so warmly that the tears sprang to their ready eyes.

Then she looked askance at Estelle, and, holding out her hand to her, said, in a far less hearty tone: "And you too, poor child."

The old lady was too wise in the ways of the world to believe that the earl's betrothed needed as much sympathy as his daughters.

This greeting left Agnes and Lord Harry standing a little apart from the others.

He looked at her—her face was crimson, his own as pale as death.

At last he extended his hand, and their cold fingers just touched and separated.

"I have had no opportunity before—allow me at this late day to offer you and your husband my congratulations, Mrs. MacLeod!" she murmured.

She looked at him in amazement; the flush went out of her face, which became as white as his own. Pride for a moment withheld the words which were finally stammered out:

"Why do you call—is it possible that you have not heard—that you do not know—that I did not marry my cousin?—that I could not and would not marry him?" she added, in a low, intense tone, looking straight into his eyes.

"Agnes!" he cried, in the same agitated voice. His countenance flashed into light; it seemed to him that he was rising in the air or sinking into the earth, he scarcely knew which. He was brought out of his confusion by the elder lady grasping his hand.

"Eh?" said she; "but I feel unco hard towards you, my boy! I know you've been in deep affliction, but who could have wept with you honest tears of sorrow if not your old friend? An' you've never called at my door, though you are often in town, as I see by the papers."

"No," answered the young earl, "I could not come to your house, I had grief enough without that. I thought, I thought, that—"

"Ha! is that so? An' I took the pains to call on Lady Augusta, and inform her o' the exact state of affairs."

All this within sight and hearing of Estelle, who lost not a word nor a glance nor a change of colour and voice. She saw Lord Harry turn pale, she saw him flush again with surprise and joy; she heard Agnes's passionate words—she knew that the end of her own new-found hopes had come!

Love her! never! never!

The goodness, the peace, the pure resolutions, fled swifter than they had come. Hate, jealousy and revenge gathered about her boiling heart like the witches about the cauldron.

No one paid any particular attention to her change of mood as she stood there, sallow and sharp, her eyes shrunken and glittering, her lip just curled in a bitter smile—like another creature from the blooming-faced girl of a few moments before.

Lord Harry did not note this dangerous change.

He had but one thought in that crisis, which was to ascertain where Agnes was stopping and if he could visit her. While his sisters spoke with her he asked these questions of her aunt.

"You can nae see her to-night," said that lady, with a shake of the head; "we're engaged out to dinner and to spend the evening. Agnes did nae wish to go, but I just compelled her, and I brought her out to buy her something to wear. She's just that indifferent she'd go in an old black silk, wad I permit it. I must tell you she was lying ill at her home all alone with the servants, and not a word did she send me about it; but I heard it through a neighbour coming this way, and I went straight after her and brought her away from that poky place, and back she shall never go with my consent. I've just adopted her. She's my daughter now, and what little I have she'll get at my death. She's been with me two weeks and has improved wonderfully. But the child is not happy," she continued, in a whisper, "and she'll not thrive as she ought. Come to-morrow, Lord Harry, in the morning. I'll take care she is in and that she sees you."

"A thousand thanks!" was the earnest response.

After ascertaining that the Bramblethorpes were to be in town but one more day the old lady went off with her niece.

Lord Harry took his companions into the shop and saw that they were receiving due attention, then went away.

Estelle could have screamed as she watched him go off with that springing step which told of his aroused hopes. She shut her teeth together. The young ladies asked her opinion of this and that article, and she forced herself to answer, though she scarcely knew what.

After a time there were more shops. Lady Augusta then had an interview with her dress-maker. Estelle walked and talked, listened and looked, and answered through it all in a mechanical way.

Her companions noted the change, attributing it to the effect of the contrast of the busy world about her with her mourning mood. They respected her feelings, making no allusions to her abstracted mood. It seemed strange to them to be here amid these beautiful things and on these gay thoroughfares while their father lay dead in his grave.

Tears often blinded their eyes, yet they had a promise of future joy which they could not ignore, and the purchases for the wedding must be made. Poor Estelle, they believed that her sorrow was more complete than their own.

In the gray of the early twilight, while the lamps were being lighted along the streets, they drove to their hotel.

They had often and often stopped at this house with their papa.

As soon as they got in their rooms they flung their arms about each other's necks and cried.

Estelle sat by the window, staring down into the noisy street.

Presently the brother came in. Augusta and Clara wiped their eyes, smiled faintly, and explained how the sight of the house and the rooms had reminded them of their father. He kissed them, speaking very tenderly and softly to them. Estelle, listening at the window, noticed the change in his voice—it had a glad and yet a very gentle tone.

Dinner was soon served privately in their little parlour. It was not until she was summoned from her hiding-place in the curtains and came into the full glare of the chandelier which hung above the table that Lord Henry noticed the change which had taken place in Estelle. It struck a chill through his warm feelings. She appeared to him a different person from the friendly girl with whom he had passed so pleasant a morning.

And she was.

(To be continued.)

WATERCRESS.

THERE are many edibles, natives of our own country, hawked about the streets, of which we might be supposed to know more than we actually do. The watercress is one of them, and most of us no doubt have seen it growing where nature has placed it, in some shallow and remote stream.

Watercress thrives best in springs or clear running water, where the bottom is either sandy or gravelly; and in such a situation it will sometimes grow a foot above the surface, though its more usual height is about six inches above the water. It has, as is well known, smooth, shining, very often brownish-green leaves, composed of five or seven ovate or rather heart-shaped leaflets. The edges of the leaflets are very slightly sinuated or waved, which is a very good characteristic to distinguish them from those of the water parsnip, with which they sometimes get mixed, and which are decidedly serrated or saw-toothed.

Watercress has been introduced into North America and into some of the British Colonies. In New Zealand it forms a stem as thick as the wrist, almost choking up many of the rivers.

Housewives of a few generations back gave to their children, in the spring of the year, a "health-giving" draught, which was a decoction of watercress, brooklime, scurvy grass, and oranges. It was said that the ancients ate watercress chiefly with lettuce, the stimulating properties of the former counteracting the coldness of the latter.

The first attempts to cultivate watercress by artificial means in Europe appear to have been made, about the middle of the sixteenth century, by Nicholas Meisner, in the numerous streams which abound in the vicinity of Erfurt. The water and soil suiting the plants, they thrived, and their cultivation became a great pecuniary success.

Cresses grown at Erfurt were, and are still, considered of superior quality, and are sent in large quantities to the markets of Berlin, a distance of about 150 miles. In the early part of the present century the cress plantations of Erfurt were so profitable that they were let by the authorities of the city to the cultivators at the yearly rent of 2,400*l.*; and the value has since that period considerably increased. The crops have been known to realize, in one year, as much as 8,000*l.*

Watercress plantations have since been established in the neighbourhood of Paris, as the demand in the French capital, in its more prosperous days, was very great, the estimated annual value of the

cress sent to the Paris markets exceeding 37,000*l.* For conveyance from the plantations the cresses are packed in large baskets containing many dozen bunches each, in such a way as to leave an entirely open space down the centre of the basket, which admits of a free circulation of air. The whole are then well watered before being loaded into the waggon, and thus they are delivered quite fresh at the markets.

We read of watercresses once growing in large quantities in the waters of Tothill Fields, Westminster, and even on the neighbouring banks of the Thames itself; but the first we hear of their cultivation, in anything like a regular manner, in England was in the year 1808, at Springhead, near Gravesend, where they are still grown, and the cress there is noted for its superior quality.

THE MAN OF LONG LIFE.

HE has a proper and well-proportioned stature, without, however, being too tall. He is rather of the middle size, and somewhat thick set. His complexion is not too florid; at any rate, too much ruddiness in youth is seldom a sign of longevity. His hair approaches rather to the fair than the black; his skin is strong, but not too rough. His head is not too big; he has large veins at the extremities, and his shoulders are rather round than flat. His neck is not too long; his abdomen does not project; and his hands are large, but not too deeply cleft. His feet are rather thick than long; and his legs are firm and round. He has also a broad, arched chest, a strong voice, and the faculty of retaining his breath for a long time without difficulty. In general there is a complete harmony in all his parts. His senses are good, but not too delicate; his pulse is slow and regular.

His stomach is excellent, his appetite good, and his digestion easy. The joys of the table are to him of importance; they tune his mind to serenity, and his soul partakes in the pleasure which they communicate. He does not eat merely for the pleasure of eating, but each meal is an hour of daily festivity; a kind of delight, attended with this advantage, in regard to others, that it does not make him poorer, but richer. He eats slowly, and has not too much thirst. Too great thirst is always a sign of rapid self-consumption.

In general, he is serene, loquacious, active, susceptible of joy, love and hope; but insensible to the impressions of hatred, anger and avarice. His passions never become too violent or destructive. If he ever gives way to anger, he experiences rather a useful glow of warmth, an artificial and gentle fever without an overflow of the bile. He is fond also of employment, particularly calm meditation and agreeable speculations, is an optimist, a friend of Nature and domestic felicity, has no thirst after honours or riches, and banishes all thoughts of to-morrow.

A MECHANICAL EYE.

NO mechanic can ever attain distinction unless he is able to detect ordinary imperfections at sight, so that he can see if things are out of plumb, out of level, out of square, and out of proper shape; and unless he can also detect disproportioned drill-shaped patterns.

This is a great mechanical attainment. I say attainment, because it can be attained by any ordinary person. Of course there are defective eyes as there are other defective organs; the speech, for instance, is sometimes defective, but the eye is susceptible of the same training as any other organ. The muscles, the voice, the sense of hearing, all require training. Consider how the artist must train the organ of sight in order to detect the slightest imperfection in shade, colour, proportion, shape, expression, etc. Not one blacksmith in five ever attains the art of hammering square; yet it is very essential in his occupation. It is simply because he allows himself to get into a careless habit; a little training and care are all that is necessary for success.

The fact is that the eye is not half as much at fault as the heedless mind. Some carpenters acquire the careless habit of using a try square every time they plane off a shaving, in place of giving their minds right to their business and properly training their eyes; and unless they cultivate this power of the eye they will always be at journey work.

Look at the well-trained blacksmith; he goes across the shop, picks up the horse's foot, takes a squint, returns to his anvil, forges the shoe, and it exactly fits the foot. Contrast him with the bungler who looks at the foot, then forges a shoe, then fits the foot to it, often to the ruin of a fine horse. Now the fault lies in ever allowing himself to put a shoe on that is not in proper shape for the foot; he should determine to make the shoe fit the foot in place of the foot fitting the shoe, and he should follow it up until the object is accomplished.

A very good way to discipline the mechanical eye is to first measure an inch with the eye, then prove it with the rule; then measure a half-inch, then an eighth, and so on, and you will soon be able to discover at a glance the difference between a twelfth and a sixteenth of an inch; then go to 3 inches, 6, 12, and so on. Some call this guessing; there is no guess-work about it; it is measuring with the eye and mind. Acquire the habit of criticising for imperfections every piece of work that you see, do everything as nearly as you can without measuring (or spoiling it), or as nearly as you can trust the eye with its present training. If you cannot see things mechanically do not blame the eye for it; it is no more to blame than the mouth is because we cannot read or the fingers because we cannot write. A person may write a very good hand with the eyes closed, the mind of course directing the fingers. The eye is necessary, however, to detect imperfections.

Every occupation in life requires a mechanically trained eye, and we should realize more than we do the great importance of properly training that organ. J. E. E.

BRAIN WORK.

ONE thing I would like to impress upon those who are exceptionally excitable. The very slightest stimulants, which others may use with impunity, are bad for them. I have known cases of chronic neuralgia, from which torture had been endured for years, cured by ceasing to drink tea and coffee regularly, or by leaving off smoking. The nerves are such delicate affairs that they often make us a great deal of trouble with very little cause seemingly. Excessive brain work renders them much more susceptible. This susceptibility must be counteracted by the avoidance of those things which tend to excite. What a steady brain worker wants is to replace (not stimulate) his vitality as fast as he uses it up. To this end he wants everything that is nourishing and soothing. A stimulant crowds out some part of the requisite nourishment, since the system can only receive a certain proportion of matter into it at a time and appropriate it harmoniously. If you set it to work on a stimulant, or set a stimulant to work on it, the action is mutual. It will not assimilate fully the nourishment which may come immediately afterward.

All the diseases to which we are constitutionally liable are aggravated by the use of stimulants. They assist the development of chronic complaints, and make all illness harder to cure. It is not necessary to speak of their bad effects on ailments of the brain. But most of these, I believe, are to be traced originally to their use. A healthy brain naturally seeks relief in sleep when it is tired. But one that is spurred and driven on by stimulants loses that inclination. From the inability to rest springs the whole train of nervous and cerebral diseases.

I believe that one, working the brain at proper hours and giving it the requisite rest, relaxation and nourishment, and never stimulating it into unhealthy action, might go on doing the very hardest mental work from youth to extreme old age and never suffer an atom from it—on the contrary, be benefited.

THE Queen, "or such other member of the Royal Family as should be pleased to represent her," is to be invited to open the new Wigan Infirmary at Easter.

LANGUAGES IN THE AUSTRIAN ARMY.—There is no army in Europe in which so many languages are spoken as in the Austrian army. The last annual return of military statistics in Austria shows that every Austrian officer knows German, 2,618 officers speak Hungarian, 2,351 speak Polish, 3,991 Bohemian, 679 Ruthenian, 2,954 Croatian, Servian and Slovenian, and 1,187 Roumanian. Further 4,394 officers speak Italian, 3,658 French, 451 English, and 431 converse freely in Russian and Turkish.

THE CAPITOLINE WOLF.—The Capitoline wolf, kept on the steps of the Capitol in remembrance of the founders of the Eternal City, recently created considerable alarm in Rome. The animal, breaking one of the bars of its cage, walked quietly up the steps. Unfortunately a large board had happened to be in the neighbourhood and, springing out the wolf, gave chase, the people round flying in terror and crying out "The wolf!" Signor Lapus being recognised the dog was at once called off and a municipal guard speedily carried the truant back to his cage.

MUSICAL SOUND.—The longest and largest pipe of the great Harlem organ, thirty-six feet in length, when sounded actually jars the whole edifice. If there are less than thirty-two vibrations in a second it is a noise analogous to the flapping of the wings of a huge bird. The human ear recognises no music in that. All vibrations above thirty-two are musical till they reach thirty thousand in a second. Such is the perfection of our auditory sense that the mind is

excited, charmed and exalted by acoustic undulations which are transmitted to the brain through a small, soft cord, scarcely larger than a single silk thread. Reflecting on the laws of sound, the extreme delicacy of the mechanism by which it is received, transmitted and analysed in a moment of time, who can doubt the existence of a Divinity whose works, independent of moral attributes, are self-evident propositions?

A CRUEL BLUNDER.

"Don't go away, Gert. You must be insane! Everybody is here, or coming. The Guyons last night—the Verdoes to-morrow."

Miss Winter looked out of her high window across the glaring white beach whereon were various-hued toilets fluttering in the sea wind.

The dangle of the sand made her head ache, the blue glittering restlessness beyond gave her that slightly nauseated sensation which is the first stage of a worse state.

Just then a black figure made a ball-room bow to a white one, and the harmless sight augmented her discomfort into a spasm of speech.

"Everybody seems to be here now. I think there is a human being for every mussel-shell on the shore. I hate the sea and all that in it is—and about it is. I'm going where I can experience rural felicity undisturbedly."

Her companion replied by a gesture expressive of horror, despair, and a washing of hands of the whole matter.

"You mustn't see a soul once a month. They'll keep you on butter-milk and Dutch cheese."

"I don't want to see souls yet, and I've had enough of bodies for a lifetime. I like butter-milk and Dutch cheese."

So when the Verdoes came in next day they met Miss Winter and a train of trunks going out. She was no more missed out of the crowded hotel than a drop out of that surging salt turbulence before its windows would have been.

So she went to the home of a school friend who had married a farmer and accepted that phase of fate.

She—Miss Winter—wore a print gown until tea-time, when she put on a muslin one. She took no thought of her complexion, and spoiled the toes of her boots climbing stone walls.

Having grown tired of that, she discovered that the deep stone doorstep was shaded the whole day round, and, commanding the prospect of a beautiful range of hill and dale, it was altogether a desirable location.

Whereupon she "located" there, and passers-by and the opposite neighbour beheld upon the gray stone a summer-clad girl's figure and bits of bright work.

Behind her lay the dark interior, and the flickering evergreen shadows rained across the middle distance.

Opposite her were the front chamber windows of the neighbour's house, where Richard Thoresby was getting well of bilious fever.

Having been promoted first to a sitting position among his pillows, and then to an arm-chair, he had her in sight all day long.

Having nothing else wherewith to interest himself, he watched her goings out and comings in with unconscious eagerness.

She floated in and out of the aforesaid dark interior like Undine out of the caves of the sea, suggesting several other poetical things.

One restless night, sitting at her window to take in at its full the picture of a dark earth and dark sky, the single point of light in the invalid's chamber had attracted her notice strongly. She spoke of it at the breakfast-table next morning.

"There's a young man ill there," her friend said, and explained no farther.

So the young man went out of Miss Winter's mind entirely, except when she saw the doctor's gig stationed before the door each day. She never asked any more questions about him.

But one afternoon, coming home through the level western sunshine, she came upon a man's disconsolate figure by the roadside. George, her farmer friend, drew up his horses with sudden energy.

"Why, Dick—what's the matter, Dick?"

"I've given out. I've walked too far," a sepulchral voice made answer.

Miss Winter beheld a wasted white face and a long figure loosely wrapped in garments that might have fitted once.

"We'll take you up then," said George, springing down from his seat.

"Mr. Richard Thoresby, Miss Winter. Take a seat, Dick, beside Miss Winter," he said as the invalid came up feebly.

So for ten minutes he sat trying to rally his unsteady wits to the point of saying something to the very pretty girl beside him. At the end of ten minutes he fainted dead away, and his head went down against her shoulder.

A week's confinement paid for that exploit. Through it Miss Winter sat on her doorstep and sewed and read and kept herself busily idle after the summer-day fashion. She had seen too many men to give this one more than a passing thought. When he crept out again, and made his first pilgrimage to the Greys' gate, Miss Winter saw him coming, and met him half down the path. The woman's kindness prompted that unconscious condescension.

The Thoresbys were pastoral lords, but of course quite another set of beings from the world-polished heroes of her acquaintance. So equally of course there was not the slightest danger of harm in the idle hours he spent at her feet through the many days of his convalescence.

Aunt Abby he called the matron of the Thoresby farmhouse. So he did not wholly belong there. She accepted the implied relationship without a definite thought about it. He and Miss Winter finding plenty of topics for discussion, they never once touched each other's personality.

There is nothing novel in the situation. Two idle people find that the time spent in each other's society is decidedly an improvement on the time spent alone, and by and by solitude grows entirely undesirable.

When Richard Thoresby and Gertrude Winter were not loitering along the shady roads and wood-paths he was reading summer literature outstretched beside her, while Mrs. Grey flitted back and forth between her sewing chair and the farm kitchen. And summer literature is of the sort usually that does not keep one's eyes and thoughts too intently fixed upon itself.

If any one had hinted to Gertrude Winter that she was getting into dangerous waters, she would have glanced back over the history of her last three winters and smiled with quiet assurance of safety.

If any one had made the same suggestion to Thoresby, he would have calmly replied that so he had been a great many times before.

A small matter showed something of the strength of the current to both of them soon.

It was late August, and in the midst of one of those shadowy hushed afternoons there began suddenly the chirp of some autumn-prophecy insect.

"There," Thoresby said. "The first note of summer's death-warrant. Do you feel rebelliously inclined when you think of what inevitably comes next?"

"What comes next?" she asked, rather faintly.

"Oh, trunk-packing with the good-byes; for you, I suppose, shopping and dressmaking, and the rest of it."

"I've only one trunk, and that somehow packs itself, and as to the good-byes—one says a good many of those in a life-time."

"Do they grow any easier? I have a constitutional antipathy to taking the trouble. And I shall be really sorry to leave the place. I believe Aunt Abby really thinks our having the same name gives her some sort of right to me."

"And you don't belong here? I thought—that is—I hadn't thought—"

"Yes," he interrupted, laughingly; "that's the way with a good many others. But I never saw or heard of her till I came here fishing, and was taken ill."

"You are going away soon?" she said, with an effort, after a pause.

"I must go. Utopia freezes up like the rest of the world. And London has a claim on me—or I have on it—in a business way which can't be ignored any longer."

Silence after that ensued for a minute or two.

"I wonder if we shall meet some other day when this summer is history?"

"Probably, if we live long enough. Everybody meets everybody in London, I believe, sooner or later."

The words were careless enough, but he felt some change in her voice—the barest shadow of unsteadiness. He looked up in her face, and saw something there that hurried his breath and his speech a little.

"Are you willing to wait the chance, Miss Winter? For myself I feel like defying fate, and declaring that the summer shall not end."

She looked down at him under her long-drooping lashes, the tender dawn of a smile about her lips, using the woman's privilege of silence.

"I just began realizing what a delicious dream these weeks have been. Are you a little sorry to have it end?"

"A little sorry," she said, gently, and then caught her breath softly—one of those faint beginnings of a sigh that mean everything or nothing as it happens.

"There are seven days more. If your memory is as good as mine, after that—"

"A woman's memory is proverbially poor, you know," she said, a little laugh in her eyes.

"Please try and remember a little, Miss Winter," growing more and more in earnest. "I shall remember so much. It is a great deal just to have

met a woman beside whom all others will henceforth lack something."

"Which experience has occurred to Mr. Thoresby—how many times?"

Mrs. Grey appeared at that juncture. Thoresby bit his lips and reared himself aloft.

Just then came a messenger from the other house.

Mr. Thoresby was wanted; a gentleman had ridden up from the railroad station to see him.

Joe Whitney stood on the doorstep awaiting him. Their meeting was enthusiastic.

Thoresby suddenly realised that civilization was dear to him after all.

He had not thought he should be so glad to see any one of the old faces.

Whitney explained his errand. A fishing excursion had been planned, and Thoresby was to be made to join it.

Success was rather a more doubtful result than Whitney had anticipated.

His friend entertained the project coolly.

The two young men were by this time in Thoresby's room.

"What a Sleepy Hollow of a place this is," Whitney said, looking out into a world of maple leaves. "No wonder you hate to have your nap broken. But I should say two months of it might be enough."

Just then a lady's figure came out of the opposite house, crossed under the maple shadows, and went out of sight into the grove beyond.

Whitney sprang out of his chair.

"By Jupiter!" he exclaimed, with utter amazement in his face. "That was Gertrude Winter."

"Yes," said Thoresby, putting a strong control on his voice. "Do you know her?"

"Know her! Don't you? Do you remember the Rollaston affair?"

"He cut his throat for some woman's sake. This was the woman?"

"Yes. She led him on month after month, let him half ruin himself for her, and then jilted him for a man old enough to be his father. But she half got her deserts. She had her wedding *trousseau* nearly prepared when he eloped with a prettier girl."

"I recall the story now, but I had never before heard the lady's name."

"I wonder what keeps her here. I thought she had gone abroad."

"I've seen a good deal of her. I should never have guessed her capable of such heartlessness. You are to be gone a week, you said?" he added, dismissing Miss Winter quietly out of their talk.

So this girl, with her sweet, simple, womanly graces, her level-looking, earnest eyes and proud lips, had been the heroine of that miserable story. He thought of the look on her face half an hour before, and reaction carried him over to the place where men go when they are internally convicted of having made idiots of themselves.

Whitney went away next morning, taking his friend's promise to join him a few hours later. Thoresby had some matters to attend to before he could get away. He set about attending to the principal matter very soon after his friend's departure.

The two ladies were sewing in the wide cool hall, Mrs. Grey with one eye on the proceedings in the dairy.

Miss Winter, cool, sweet and quiet, had both eyes on the baby's dress she was hemming, and kept them there.

Thoresby dropped into his accustomed place, and tried to see her in the light of last night's revelations. It was not hard to see how a man might go mad for love of her; it was not quite so easy to read treachery under such an exterior. But then it was a woman's trait—had been since Eve—with which bit of well-worn philosophy he strengthened his purpose of assuring her that he was not a victim.

"I'm indicating a farewell call," he said, "I am going away this noon."

Mrs. Grey was surprised, and said so. Miss Winter gave him one quick, shy look, caught his eyes watching her face, and dropped her lids with a "sixteen-year-old consciousness, and excellently well done, too," Thoresby said to himself.

Ten minutes afterward they were sauntering together down the wood path towards "The Falls."

It was a very trifling affair in the way of a fall—the clear brown brook made a leap over a miniature precipice, tore itself into a rage of white foam, and gurgled into the wood shadows with a degree of self-satisfaction not warranted by the occasion. All the air was sweet and cool and sunlocked through the trees.

It was by no means their first visit. Miss Winter dropped into her accustomed seat. Thoresby took his below and beside her just as naturally. He could look up into her drooping, sweet face, just now rather quiet and absent. Neither spoke for five full minutes. After all his righteous indignation, Thoresby found it rather hard to begin. He lay idly fingering the copy of Tennyson he had picked up at the house.



[LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE.]

Then that measured musical taunt, Lady Clara Vere de Vere, lay before his eyes. I suppose that Lady Clara and Locksley Hall have furnished more texts to rejected and despairing swains than all the other poems in the English language.

Thoresby improved the suggestion. He broke the stillness with a laugh meant to be natural and easy. It sounded mocking and shallow.

"See what I've stumbled on," said he, holding up the volume. "Could anything be more appropriate? Lady Clara, we've come almost to the end of our little play."

She raised her white lids slowly, with that surprised, steady look which now and then came into her face as into a child's. He did not trust himself to look at her. He had to go on. She did not help him out by word or question.

"It was a pity that Whitney came yesterday. I don't mind confessing it," he continued, with a laugh, "for you came very nearly adding another leaf to your laurels. Since accident interposed to save me, I can afford to acknowledge you the cooler hand."

"I don't in the least understand, Mr. Thoresby," she said, coldly.

"Shall I quote for your enlightenment?"

"You thought to break a country heart."

"For pastime, ere you went to town."

It wasn't your fault if the 'country heart' had had town seasoning. If he was beaten with his own weapons, Miss Winter, so much the more experience he will have to bring to the next occasion. But he was very much in love with you yesterday. But he was very much in love with you yesterday."

"You do me injustice," she faltered. "Pardon me; I thought I gave you the fullest measure of credit. I honestly thought you—yesterday—the sweetest, truest woman I had ever seen. Can I say anything more flattering to your abilities as an actress?"

There were tears and flame in the look she gave him. He hurt her, and he took a savage satisfaction in it. She rose and stood beside him as he reclined.

"I don't ask what has changed your sentiments. It is quite evident that you came here to inflict a premeditated insult. It of course doesn't matter how I judge you now. I thought you a gentleman yesterday."

She stood there looking down on him with a face from which he could not withdraw his eyes. He was very sure that he should not care to recall the quivering nostrils and trembling lips and the black, lowering brows, and yet he was scanning every line as carefully as if he meant to cherish the face for a lifetime. Gertrude Winter was in a rage.

"You will accompany me back to the house, if you please," she went on, after a pause. "It is not necessary that Mrs. Grey should know of this scene."

He rose quite meekly. He would no more have dared disobedience than if Juno had commanded.

They did not open their lips all the way back. At the gate they parted.

He did not offer his hand; he knew she would not touch it if he did.

"Why, where's Mr. Thoresby?" said Mrs. Grey, who was shelling peas for dinner.

That was an excuse for not looking up again after her first glance at her friend's face.

"Gone. He seemed in some haste. I'm not sure that I asked him to come in. You should have told me that young man's antecedents, Alice."

That was all she could say.

Mrs. Grey made answer with some evasive nonsense.

"He has gone the way of all the rest, and she has brought him to his senses," she was saying to herself, never once doubting Miss Winter's fascinating powers.

That young lady went up to her room in a novel state of mind. Thoresby's conduct was utterly inexplicable. Yet conscience did not acquit her. No woman could live such a life as hers had been for three years without some twinges in retrospection. Not that she was in any degree "fast," or had a reputation as a flirt.

Most people thought her proud and cold and reserved.

The men who had found her sweet and winning, however much they blamed her with their breath, in their hearts believed her as near perfection as they had always done. But her own heart did not hold her guiltless.

She finished proceedings with a flood of tears, and fell asleep at the end of that.

Mrs. Grey, coming in search of her at dinner-time, found her oblivious, and left her so.

She appeared in mid-afternoon, clad in misty white, her unaltered self.

Meanwhile Thoresby, jogging over the country roads, felt less of the dignified satisfaction of a man who has inflicted righteous judgment than might have been expected.

Tones and looks and words kept stinging him with a passionate sense of lost sweetness. Only by falling back on the fact of her connection with Rollaston's fate could he hold himself from acknowledging that his own share in the morning's interview had been unmanly and unprovoked.

Miss Winter stayed out the time she had planned for herself—two weeks longer. She spoke of Thoresby when the others did. She was guiltless of emotion, even the natural regret she might have felt at the absence of her only companion.

Then her trunk packed itself, as she had said, and she went back home.

Miss Winter's life was like that of most young ladies. She had no accomplishments to cultivate, and she had brains enough not to be satisfied with the aimless idleness of the days. She fell just then into a state of mind which, with a little more restlessness of intellect and a little less womanliness of training, might have made her a model.

As it was, she went about for a fortnight in a chaotic state of sensation which extended itself to her actions and produced great bewilderment in the family circle.

Just then she met Joe Whitney. It was by the bedside of an aunt of his, who had a habit of summoning the family at fortnightly intervals to see her die.

Then, after disposing of her personal effects, differently on each occasion, and taking advantage of the opportunity to express her opinion of each separate member of said family, she would go quietly to sleep, and the assemblage would disperse. Joe, not understanding this slight peculiarity, was frightened and indignant at the apparent indifference of the others.

He came running upstairs on hearing from a servant that "Miss Betty says she's a dying, sir," and found the usual group about the bedside. His cousins were veiling their internal emotions under faces of decent sobriety.

A slight, black-dressed figure was bending over the invalid, endeavouring to reassure and comfort her.

"Indeed you're not dying, Miss Betty. It is only a nervous attack."

Whereupon the sufferer, indignant at the disparaging "only," redoubled her gasps and struggles. Having an addition to her audience, she aired her whole collection of symptoms. She threw her whole weight—and she was no sylph—into the arms of the frightened girl beside her, and made frightful faces and clutched at nothing, and did the whole hysteric rôle.

"Let me take your place," Joe said, softly; and then as the white, excited face was raised to his he recognized Gertrude Winter.

Well, the scene was finished.

Miss Betty told them what she thought of them all, and, being exhausted with her exertions, went to sleep with her maid in attendance beside her to keep off the flies.

Then they all trooped downstairs, and Kate said: "You're not used to such exhibitions, Joe. Wait till you've been through a dozen or so. Aunt Betty got into a rage with her dressmaker this morning. Have you and Miss Winter met before? Gertie—Cousin Joe Whitney."

Miss Winter, looking up with the intention of acknowledging the introduction, burst into a fit of crying instead—which frightened Joe worse than the other performance—and sent the girls flying after all sorts of restoratives.

Poor Joe found himself fanning the woman against whom his honest young soul had vowed eternal enmity, and feeling a sentiment of genuine pity for her.

The fright and excitement and general strain in her nerves ended in a headache, and she lay on the library sofa all day, with the girls sewing near her and Joe being entertaining at intervals. In his crude judgments of human nature he had fancied that with that central fact in her history she would appear to him with a legible mark of Cain on her forehead.

Instead of which she was pale and gentle, and looked tired and troubled, a little as if there were some under-weariness of pain in her heart.

That was the beginning. When he met her again, two or three evenings after, in the mists of a gauzy dress, he saw only the sweet, gentle face and smiling eyes.

Miss Winter's trained instinct took immediate cognizance of the state of things. She could no more help bringing her gifts and graces to bear on such a case than she could help breathing.

Joe Whitney found himself going the appointed way—or rather other people saw him. He had but one thought; when he was in her presence to stay as long as possible, when he was out of it to get back as soon as might be.

I am not disposed to blame Miss Winter entirely. She did not half believe in the man's sincerity. She did not give him credit for having kept so much heart at his disposal. She liked him genuinely, but in such a fashion that the nearer he came the more hopeless his case seemed. Not that he defined the position to himself; he felt the difference and all its intangible impossibilities. He was three years older than she, had seen men and things and knew books, and she treated him as if he had been ten years younger. What could a man do? He chafed and fretted, and called himself names; haunted her the more assiduously, and found himself admitted to an unconscious confidence which vexed his soul. All that transpired in four weeks.

Miss Winter's share in the tragedy he had known sank into some obscure place in his mind. If she chose, she could explain it all. She did not choose, and all the same he knew she must have been guiltless.

If Rollaston chose to kill himself for her sake, it was no more than a good many other men might be willing to do—with proper provocation. As to the rest, he did not believe it. Women slandered women so. And so his infatuation went on, and in the depth of his devotion he never dared hint at a word of love.

One morning, rainy, gray and cold, when the season hung cheerlessly between autumn and winter, Whitney put in his usual appearance.

Miss Winter met him in the hall, and laughed at him as he got himself out of his dripping overcoat. An errand from Kate was the excuse this time. The errand took two minutes, but as Miss Winter had taken up her sewing he proceeded to cut the leaves of a new magazine.

They were so comfortably secure from interruption that the hour slid round to two. He glanced up from his book.

Miss Winter's work lay in her lap, her eyes were fixed on something ten thousand miles away; her face looked pale and thin and worn. Perhaps it was the effect of the cold gray light, perhaps of the dress she wore. It was a deep, solid, unrelieved red. Something about her struck a memory or an association that shook him with positive pain.

Miss Winter's eyes came back to the present. "Well?" she said, answering the troubled interrogation in his face.

"Were you ever at Torquay?"

"No," she replied, quietly, with her eyes on his. "I met a lady there," he went on, looking away from her. "I saw her but once. She had your name. She was dressed then just as you are now. I have always thought it must have been you—until just now. You are so much alike, and yet there is a difference—"

"You met my cousin, Gertrude Winter. She is abroad now."

He drew a long breath of relief.

"I am very glad. I could not bear to have you associated with that dreadful—"

And here he stopped.

"I know. You are thinking of Edward Rollaston. I think the ghost of that terrible wickedness will haunt me as long as I live. My cousin and I were in the same house. The message was given me by mistake, and I was with him when he died. It was a cruel blunder. I think there has not been a month since that I have not in some way felt its consequences."

The tired face looked so worn and almost haggard now.

All Joe's soft heart sprang up to his lips, and uttered itself in a jumble of incoherences.

When he got his breath he was conscious of dead silence and half-frightened eyes looking at him wistfully.

"I never thought of this. I have been selfish and careless. You will not believe me, but I am so sorry."

"You mean," said he, unsteadily, "that you care nothing for me. I knew it before, and I was mad to say this to you. I didn't mean to tell you; it told itself, I think. But, oh, Gertrude, I love you so—I love you so!"

Her eyes brimmed over at that, and the tears having started a sob or two followed.

That finished his discomfiture.

He came and bent over her, swallowing his own emotions and coining her as if she had been a child.

"There, don't cry. I didn't mean to agitate you."

I'll never say another word about it if you'll forget this. Don't cry, dear."

And the absurdity of the position striking Miss Winter she followed his advice.

She could say nothing to him, she knew better than to try advice or comfort now. For once she was sincerely sorry for the climax just attained. She meant cure, and perhaps at the bottom of it all was just a little shadow of tender belief in his love for her which made her trust him.

"I'm going to tell you," said she, putting her hand on his as he stood beside her. "You'll think me cruel and weak, I'm afraid, but you had better know the truth. I've been very selfish—thinking only of myself all these weeks. I've been very unhappy. Last summer I met a man whom—don't sneer at me—I almost loved. I thought he cared for me—or rather I didn't think at all—till the last time I saw him, when he affected to think that I had been playing with him, complimented me on my powers as an actress, gave me to understand that it had been a trial of skill, simply, between us. I was angry, wounded, grieved. No man had ever a chance before to say such things to me. Do you see? And sometimes I've fancied there must have been a blunder. I couldn't so have misread him. But it is all over for me, I suppose; don't despise me quite. I shall marry some man who will be good to me and let me have my own way, and not care enough to fret me because I can't worship him. You see I'm not very well worth loving," she added, looking up at him with a sad expression.

But Joe Whitney was not thinking of her at all just then, at least not directly. A suspicion flashed across him and took the strength out of his joints.

"It was last August. The man was Richard Thoresby."

"Yes," she said, blank amazement appearing in her face.

He walked away from her and stood for a minute by the window, looking out on the dripping rain and falling leaves.

There was a hard struggle going on. Joe Whitney had never been afraid of consequences in his life, but he quaked now.

"I think Thoresby did love you. When I ran down to see him to get him to join a fishing party I saw you from a window, mistook you for your cousin whom I had once met, and told him."

He waited for a minute with bent head, expecting to be crushed with her next words. She only said, wearily:

"You see it is true what I told you. The ghost of a sin another committed follows me everywhere."

He took one step nearer her.

"He is in town, Miss Winter. I met him this morning. I shall go to him and tell him the mistake I made."

She saw how white his lips were, and guessed something of what the words cost.

"You shall not go. It was not your fault. You are too generous."

But he read her heart underneath it, and went.

The rainy day dragged by till sunset, when there was a gusty clearing up. The sunlight flamed out and baptized the world with a new hopefulness.

All day Miss Winter had started at every sound of the door bell as if the wires had touched her own heart. The unwonted strain sent the colour into her cheeks and the fire into her eyes. There were callers in the evening, and she asserted herself after the old fashion.

At ten o'clock there was another peal at the door. Miss Winter was alone in the parlour; she heard Whitney's voice asking for her. She started up, unable to affect the composure she did not feel.

His face was very quiet and grave. He came straight up to her and laid his hands on her shoulders.

"He is married," he said, slowly.

She did not reply, turning away and sinking into the chair she had just left. There was a long stillness. Whitney stood leaning on the back of her chair, not speaking nor moving. She turned after a while.

"I had forgotten you," she said, wearily, then seeing how her words hurt him, added, "You have been very, very good to me. But you see it is all over, and—do you despise me for caring for a man who could forget so easily? You see, do you not, it was acting, after all?"

"Good-night and good-bye," he said. "I shall go away to-morrow. I cannot forgive myself."

Miss Winter shed no more tears after that. She was not of the lackadaisical kind. She assumed her old place in her circle, and no one noted any change either for the heroic or the pathetic. After a few weeks there seemed a strong prospect that she would fulfil her own prophecy in regard to herself. The man who was to be good to her and let her have her own way was a West Indian of forty-five. Society looked on the affair as very nearly settled when Whitney came back.

One afternoon as she was rather listlessly surveying a celebrated picture displayed in a shop window

some one whispered a greeting over her shoulder, and she turned to meet Whitney's face.

He had come back cured, he said. He told her so as he walked back home with her.

From that hour the old relation seemed to begin again, and yet with a difference.

Miss Winter no longer felt the balance of power on her side.

He certainly no longer stood in worshipful awe of her. He commented on her dress, he criticized her singing. He never monopolized her society if any other man wanted it.

But for all that, or perhaps because of that, their relations toward each other puzzled the public.

One day, when one of his infrequent daylight errands had brought him to the house, she was away driving with the golden West Indian.

She came in flushed and bright, and exceedingly pretty.

He explained his arrangement about the concert tickets he had brought, and then stood with his back to her, tapping against the window.

"Gertrude, are you going to marry that man?" he asked, suddenly.

"Not before he asks me. Probably not then."

"That's good. He isn't the man."

"Ah, well," she said, with a little sigh; "he's as good as the average. And I'm getting on in years, you know," she added, after a pause.

"Yes."

"You mustn't come here so much. People will gossip. And then—pardon me—you know all that was over so long ago that I may say it—some day this may stand in the way of some one for whom you might care?" said she, looking up at him half timidly.

"I'm not alarmed. I've no doubt my time will come, as every one else's seems to. When it does I shall report to you the very first."

So the winter went and the summer after, and another winter came.

These two kept the even tenor of their way, and people had nearly stopped talking for want of anything new to say. Their relations had not altered by one single degree.

Whitney had found a pretty country blonde during his summer journeyings, of whom he talked a good deal to Miss Winter, but as this was the sixth time he had met in a year she did not feel that a crisis was imminent.

Of Richard Thoresby not one word had been said between them.

Miss Winter had meanwhile learned from Mrs. Gray a little more of him than Whitney had told her. He had married a pretty, brainless flirt, who had flung herself at his head, and they had gone abroad. The engagement had been of the shortest; of him Mrs. Gray knew nothing since his marriage. If any weight of monotony oppressed her days after that she said nothing of it.

When one's fate is certainly fixed there is a kind of rest about it not wholly devoid of comfort.

When Whitney was discoursing on the perfections of each successive divinity he used to watch her eyes, and lips, hoping to catch some hint of what lay underneath. He knew that he never came very near her life. Sweet and friendly, and entirely unconstrained as she was, beyond a certain limit he never passed.

One day—the day before Christmas—Miss Winter was coming home, laden with Christmas packages.

The railway carriage was crowded, and she had no thought of recognizing a familiar face among the other passengers.

Absorbed in a new book, she did not glance up till just opposite her destination.

Rising suddenly then several bundles fell, the abrupt stoppage of the carriage nearly threw her headlong, and there was a little scene of confusion.

She did not notice who helped her gather up her fallen burdens, or assisted her from the carriage till she turned to thank him.

Then she stood face to face with Richard Thoresby. There was no time for talk in the little interval before the train again moved on.

As she turned away she saw him re-enter the carriage. She had seen him—that was all.

There had been no words, no looks that told anything.

When she reached home she sat down to think, and found no material for that process.

She had promised to attend a Christmas party that night—a children's party in the Whitney family, and Joe was to attend her.

She dressed early, and was in the unlighted parlour when he came.

"I've something to tell you, young woman. Is the pulse steady?" he said, holding her wrist.

"Not very, I'm afraid. Let me anticipate your news. Richard Thoresby is in town."

"You've seen him?"

"For a minute—yes."

"How much do you know?"

"Nothing."

"His wife is dead. He asked me if we were engaged. He is coming to see you to-morrow." He held her wrist still. He felt it throbbing under his fingers. His grasp tightened. He had kept his voice careless and steady until now. When he spoke again it was broken and eager.

"He will ask you to marry him. Are you going to say 'yes'?"

She understood him well enough. She looked up into his tragic face, and the smiles and dimples ran over her.

"I think, Joe—if you don't mind—it will be—just as you say."

He stood for a stunned minute.

"Do you mean—There, will any one tell me what I have done to deserve this?" and he broke into a sob.

Whereupon Miss Winter attempted comfort with signal success.

Richard Thorsby came next day just as she was opening a little package that a servant had just handed her.

She called his attention to the flashing circle when the greetings and first commonplaces were over.

"My Christmas gift from Mr. Whitney," she said, slipping the ring over her finger, her eyes on Thorsby's face.

He bowed, a bitter little smile about his lips.

"I understand. It seems that I am to pay the penalty of another man's mistake."

He shook himself away very soon.

"I shall not see you again. I am going to—I don't just know whither. I wish you a happy new year, you and—Mr. Whitney."

Before she quite knew what was happening she felt his kisses on her forehead and lips. Then the door clanged, and he was gone.

But happy people are usually selfish ones. These two did not let the memory of his disappointment shadow their future.

K. R.

GLIMPSES OF SOCIETY.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"Has Mr. Zane returned?" was the anxious, hurried inquiry which left Mrs. Zane's lips when she re-entered her house in company with Mr. Merritt.

She spoke to Mary, who opened the door.

"No, ma'am, but the old master is back this minute just. He has gone up to ask Mrs. Heartwell some questions, ma'am. He says both the old people are dead down in his cottage."

"Dead! oh, how horrible!" cried Mrs. Zane, hurrying on.

Mr. Everts met her as she and Mr. Merritt entered the sitting-room.

"What is this about Edward—where is he?" Mr. Everts asked.

Anna told all she knew. It was but little, and it left everything to conjecture.

"If Edward Zane has voluntarily left this house to enter on another course of dissipation I shall have lost all my faith in there being one redeeming quality in his nature. If he has he is worse than a brute—he is a villain, a double-dyed villain!"

"Father, dear father, Edward is my husband!"

"I am sorry for it, child—sorry for it! And it isn't the first time in a week that I've said so, either," said the old gentleman, impatiently.

Anna wept.

"I don't mean to hurt your feelings, my dear; but it is too bad—too bad when Mr. Merritt and Mr. Talmage have both aided with me to try to save him."

"It may not be his fault, sir," sobbed Anna. "I do not believe he went away in cold thoughtlessness."

"No, nor I. I am afraid that he thought too much. No one could force him away from here in broad daylight without being seen. His hat and cane are gone from the place where they were always left. There is no sign of a struggle here. He must have stolen out while you were attending to Mrs. Heartwell and Mary had gone for the doctor."

Anna could not say it was not so, so she only wept on.

"The question is where is he now? You have been to his club-house. They say he is not there, and that Bludge and Volchui are in Croydon. Mr. Merritt has seen Bludge, so that subterfuge fails through. The house of Stella Hayden is looked up, and she too is said to be gone. I don't believe it, but if she has gone he has gone with her."

"Oh, no, no, father; I will not believe it."

"Child, I hope you will not have to."

"Heaven grant she may not," said Mr. Merritt.

"I must at once see Stoke. He will soon unravel the mystery. If Edward is on the face of the earth he will find him," said Mr. Everts. "Remain here, Mr. Merritt, till I go to see the detective and return—that is, if you can consistently with other duties."

"I will remain, sir," said Mr. Merritt.

Mr. Everts hastened away to find Mr. Stoke, and Mrs. Zane, excusing herself, went to see how Mrs. Heartwell was while Mr. Merritt took up a morning paper to read during her absence.

When she returned he asked Mrs. Zane a question, which had been suggested by a paragraph which he had just read in a paper in regard to the purchase of a new yacht.

His question was this: "Were you aware, my good Mrs. Zane, that your husband had purchased a yacht?"

"Oh, yes, sir; but he intends to sell her. He said only this morning that he would not put his feet on board of her because I could not go to sea with him."

"Ah! that alters the case—if he was sincere. The thought just struck me that he might have gone to his yacht."

"It might be—it might be," she sighed. "But he seemed so earnest, so repentant, so anxious to be good, that I cannot believe it."

"Well, I admire your faith in him. The noblest trait in woman is her fidelity. Therefore man should imitate her to be worthy of her."

Mr. Everts soon returned.

"Stoke has left town," he said. "He has been called away by important business. Even his assistants are absent. But I have sent for a detective, who has an excellent reputation—Mr. Bennett. He will be here soon—maybe that is his ring at the bell. I will go to the door."

He came back in a few seconds and with him a quiet-looking, middle-aged man, who at a first glance would attract no attention from any other than a very close observer.

But such a one would see in his compact, well-knit frame, his quick, muscular action, his keen, sharp eye, and the close, set lips, a man of nerve, courage and undaunted resolution—quick to perceive and determined in work.

"Mr. Bennett, we are in trouble here, and want you to help us out of it!" said Mr. Everts. "I had Stoke engaged, but thought his work was done, and paid him off. He has gone out of town, so I wrote to your chief asking your help!"

"He has ordered me to report to you, sir!"

"Well, Mr. Bennett, I suppose we should explain everything. Since my son-in-law, this lady's husband, fell heir to a fortune certain sharpers, two men and one woman especially, have been leading him into dissipation for the undoubted purpose of robbing him of all they can get!"

The detective bowed to show that he heard all, but he made no remark.

Mr. Everts went on:

"They got him into a train of dissipation, from which, aided by Stoke, I withdrew him. Three days ago I got him home here—he signed a pledge of abstinence from drink, and he thought he would keep it. He has been quite ill, but this morning seemed very well, quite happy and contented, and we were all rejoicing in the belief that his reformation was complete and sincere. Suddenly, while the servant was out and his wife upstairs, he has disappeared. My daughter has sought for him at his club and at Madame Hayden's."

"Hayden—Stella Hayden?" said the detective, eagerly. "Is she the woman leagued with the two men you spoke of, sir?"

"Yes, Mr. Bennett. She is the woman, or fiend!"

"Then the two men are Barnabas Bludge and a fellow who calls himself Count Volchui?"

"Yes, yes—you know the parties?"

"They are known to me officially, sir, and they are a hard set to deal with—the woman is especially. She employed me only a few days since to try and recover a case of jewels that were stolen from her. I am on the track of the thieves—or rather of the thief and his after accomplices. I have traced them to a rendezvous for river thieves and expect to find them before long. They are well disguised. But this is not to the point. You wish Mr. Zane found. Have you any idea where he has gone?"

"None—we are utterly at a loss. When we were all together this morning he seemed contented and happy. I was summoned to one of my cottages, which was broken into, my gardener murdered and two old people whom I had placed there so injured and shocked that both have died—"

"Ah, this occurred last night! We were talking of it when you sent for me!"

"Yes, sir, four men—"

"Two men and one boy, I think."

"Yes, Mr. Bennett, you are right—there were two men and a boy."

"I have a clue. They are the very parties I saw after—they hold Stella Hayden's jewels. And now this murder and now robbery is on them. They will not long evade me. But back to the point. You think Mr. Zane has fallen back to his bad habits?"

"I do not know. I cannot account for his absence."

It must be voluntary. He could not have been violently abducted from here in broad daylight without some notice being made—some notice attracted."

"True; but he may have been inveigled into a carriage on some little pretence. There is a heap of rascality going on, sir—more than any one not in our line would dream of. I knew, not long since, sir, a young lady abducted right in sight of her parents, and from the very arm of her betrothed lover. When I have more time I may tell you how it was done. But action is the word now. I will go to the house of Stella Hayden. If she is there I will see her—if she is not I will enter it in some way and look for a clue there. If I find it I will report. You had better remain here, for you will see or hear from me in an hour."

The detective now left upon his mission.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

NIGHT was near at hand; and even as shadows had come suddenly, darkly, wildly upon the joy-sky of the young wife, when she thought all was becoming clear, so now darkness, even, while the sun was setting in a cloud-bank, a keen, menacing wind began to rattle door and window-sashings and to drive threatening clouds athwart the sky.

The detective, Mr. Bennett, had not been to the house of Mrs. Zane since he left it after the noon-day hour.

But he had sent two messages—written ones—to Mr. Everts.

The first was:

"The Stella Hayden mansion is empty—the birds have flown, but the nest is warm. I have a letter, a most important clue, I will seek farther and report in an hour or two."

This was sent by the hand of another detective.

Mr. Everts and Anna Zane waited with feverish impatience.

Mr. Merritt had gone home.

The second despatch came at four o'clock in the afternoon:

"I am satisfied that Mr. Zane was decoyed from his home on a false pretence—is now in the hands of those we suspected. Whether he is restrained or not this night will most likely determine. Mr. Everts had better prepare for a night cruise down the river in a fast tugboat which I have secured for the purpose. I hope to succeed in restoring Mr. Zane unharmed to his house. I will call for Mr. Everts as soon as all preparations are made."

And now as the sun sank into a cradle of inky black, while the wind shrieked louder and louder, the father and daughter waited for him to come.

"Decoyed. He did not go willingly."

That was what true, devoted Anna had repeated, oh, so many times after that second despatch came. It was her comfort, her joy even in that dark, and house. She would not believe her husband false to his pledge, to his love to her.

Oh, woman, blessed to your strong faith, cruel indeed is he who would deceive you.

A furious storm broke at last.

Through the darkness the gas-lamps glimmered heavily, while nobody was abroad who could well stay in, for gusts of rain came with the wind, now and then, driving into faces and drenching forms as well.

Yet Mr. Bennett came.

"We are ready you see!" said Mrs. Zane, putting on a hooded cloak the moment he entered the room where she and her father waited for him.

"We? Why, surely, madam, you will not venture out in a tempest like this?"

"The storm which you do not heed while serving us should not keep us in whom you are serving," said Mrs. Zane.

"But, madam—it is perilous on the water!"

"My husband, if you think to find him there, is exposed to that peril, and, to worse. I must go, Mr. Bennett!"

"She has held firmly to that despite all my objections!" said Mr. Everts. "I feel we must let her have her way!"

"But, sir—we may have to encounter desperadoes—it is no place for a woman. I care not for any peril to myself—but I fear for her!"

"I do not fear for myself, Mr. Bennett. Heaven will shield me!"

"Then, lady, I will say no more. Do you wish to see the letter they sent to decoy your husband away with? I found it, with a false wig and beard on the floor of the woman's bed-chamber. The wig and beard most likely disguised some one who personated a doctor."

Anna read the letter and handed it to her father.

"See—they knew that he was sensitive and tender-hearted—that he would try to keep her from committing suicide—they gave him no time to think—they dragged him away by his heart-strings! I see it all!"

"Why did he not come back—his errand done?" said Mr. Evans.

"Because he was drugged—or chloroformed!" said Mr. Bennett. "A man answering his description was lifted into the carriage which took Stella Hayden from the house."

"Oh, thank Heaven, that in all this danger I can believe my husband innocent," cried Mrs. Zane. "Come—come. Why do we delay our instant? Come, let us seek him. I care not for storm, for danger—let me face death, but let me find him. The harpies shall not hold him in their power."

"I have a carriage at the door to take us to the wharf. The steamer is a fast and seaworthy tug-boat, commanded by a brave and skilful man," said the detective as he turned to the door.

Mary stood tearfully to say farewell to her mistress. She knew she could leave the house, for Mrs. Heartwell was very weak and low still, and some one must stay with her, or she would have begged to go with her mistress.

She went to the door, however, and prayed for blessings on her head till she could no longer see her or even hear the carriage, and then she went back to pray for her safe return.

At her moorings, with a heavy pressure of steam on a small, sharp-built tug waited the orders of the detective and his arrival.

When the carriage drew up, and Bennett stepped out, he blew a shrill whistle, and, while he led Mrs. Zane to the tug, Mr. Evans following, there was heard, even above the wail of the wind, an answering whistle, and soon after, with the steady tread of military drill, thirteen men—twelve privates and a sergeant of the force, in uniform and well armed—came down the wharf.

"I see you don't mean to trifle," said Mr. Evans to the detective as he saw these men come on board.

"No, sir; the work ahead of us may not be trifling. There is a large crew in the yacht, and your son-in-law did not choose the crew. The man who did would not choose any but lawless and desperate men."

"Then Edward is in his yacht?"

"I expect so. I have ascertained that a schooner yacht, supposed to be the 'Stellarita,' was seen sailing down the river."

The detective now entered the pilot-house. A minute passed, the bell was heard to tinkle in the engine-room, and from the pilot-house sharp and quick came an order:

"Cast off!"

The next moment the little tug went plunging down the river, her propeller driving her swiftly on in the very face of the strong wind.

(To be continued.)

FACETIÆ.

LEGITIMATE CRITICISM.

Aged Village Matron (to Sympathizing Visitor): "It's a 'cookery book,' as Mrs. Penwiese, our 'district lady,' gave me this Christmas, miss. I'd a deal sooner a' had the ingriddiments, miss!"—*Punch.*

HIGH COMPLIMENT TO THE COUNTY HOSPITAL.
Friend (to individual wheeling hog-tub): "An' how be thy wife gettin' on in the hospital, Jack?"

Individual with hog-tub: "Oh, first rate. They be rare and kind to her there—they feeds her just as well as I does my pigs!"—*Fun.*

A MISTAKE SOMEWHERE!

All along o' the long Ulster.

Flyman (to Brown Esquise, Esq.): "I say, guv'nor, just put the nosebag on for us, will yer?" and tell Jemmy I'm going over to the 'Jolly Sailor Boys' if he likes to 'ave a pint.'—*Fun.*

ANCIENT AND MODERN ART.—Pictures by the Old Masters adorn the inner walls of the National Galleries. Those of the Young Masters embellish the exteriors of other buildings, and also decorate the gates and door-posts. The last-named members are mostly members of an academy composed of eads.—*Punch.*

EXACTLY WO!

Our Friend Charley: "Have you read Darwin's book, Miss Glibbons?"

Miss G: "Oh, yes."

Charley: "And—ah—what do you think of it?"

Miss G (who may have been asked the same question before): "I think it a very exhaustive treatise upon the indeterminate modifications in which the sensibilities of human nature are involved!"

[*Charley is rather sorry he spoke.*—*Fun.*]

A SPLENDID OPPORTUNITY.—A good many people seem to be uneasy in their minds about Lord Byron's grammar and meaning in some of his famous lines to the Ocean. Cannot the Spiritualists help them? Cannot they communicate with the poet, and ascertain from him what he really did

write? By so doing they would dissipate the anxieties of many sensitive and excellent persons, and probably, after giving such a practical proof of the use of Spiritualism, convert sceptics and unbelievers into inquirers and disciples.—*Punch.*

A HAPPY MAN.

Inquisitive Lady: "Who, may I ask, are those three tall ladies singing?"

Communicative Stranger: "The Miss Bilderbories."

Inquisitive Lady: "They seem rather remarkable persons!"

Communicative Stranger: "Quite so. By all who are so favoured as to possess the privilege of their acquaintance they are with justice admitted to be morally, physically, and intellectually perfect!"

Inquisitive Lady: "Dear me! And the lady at the piano?"

Communicative Stranger: "She was also a Miss Bilderbory. Indeed, she was by far the most transcendently gifted of them all."

Inquisitive Lady: "Dear me! Then is she so no longer?"

Communicative Stranger: "On the contrary, marriage has improved her!"

Inquisitive Lady: "Good gracious! And whom did she marry, pray?"

Communicative Stranger: "Me."—*Punch.*

MEMORIES.

They come on the breeze of morning,

They come with the dying day,

They pity my lonely spirit,

And carry it far away—

Away on the wings of fancy,

To wander in realms sublime,

Surrounded by golden glory,

Unshackled by space or time.

And there among dreams of beauty,

And visions of light and love,

And murmuring sounds of music,

That float in the air above,

The forms of the long departed

Come forth from a mist of gloom,

And beckon with loving gesture

My wandering spirit home.

And there is no more heart-aching,

For pinions of love we spread—

And floating in endless glory,

With shadow-light overhead,

'Mong rustling trees that murmur

To rippling, silvery streams,

Our spirits hold sweet communion

Immured in this land of dreams.

Oh, love, with the sunlit tresses!

Oh, love, with the eyes of blue!

Come forth from the best Eternal

And beckon my soul to you.

And weariness all shall banish,

My spirit shall find its peace

With thee, the beloved and loving,

Where sorrow and longing cease.

Even now there's a yearning forebode

Of gladness without alloy

That comes in these sweet heart visions,

O'erflowing my soul with joy.

I taste of it in the gloaming,

When wearying toil is done,

And the shadow upon my spirit

Goes off with the setting sun.

They come on the breeze of morning,

They come with the dying day,

They pity my lone, sad spirit,

And carry it far away—

Away on the wings of fancy,

To joys of the shadow-land,

Which only the soul's deep longing

Is able to understand.

G. E. W.

GEMS.

THE tears of our misery often prevent our eyes from seeing the mercy close at hand.

THERE is but one greater absurdity than that of a man aiming to know himself, which is, for him to think he knows himself.

WISDOM and truth, the offspring of the sky, are immortal; but cunning and deception, the meteors of the earth, after glittering for a moment, must pass away.

THE last, best fruit which comes to late perfection, even in the kindest soul, is tenderness toward the hard, forbearance toward the unbearingly, warmth of heart toward the cold, philanthropy toward the misanthropic.

SHOW us the family where good music is cultivated, where the parents and children are accustomed often to mingle their voices together in song, and we will show you one, in almost every instance, where

peace, harmony and love prevail, and where the great vices have no abiding place.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SAUSAGE MEAT.—If you want it extra nice, take two fresh hams and one shoulder; take off the skin and have it chopped nicely, season it with salt, pepper, sage, and a very little sugar. If you like spiced meats, use with that a few cloves, some mace, and nutmeg. Keep it in a dry, cool place, and fry it in balls, or stuff the skins when first you make it for dried sausages.

DYEING WOOL BROWN.—The advantage of the process here described consists in that the operation can be carried out in one vat. One hundred pounds of wool are left for half an hour in a boiling bath containing 30 pounds yellow wood, 3 pounds alum, 2 pounds crystals of tartar and 1 pound sulphate of copper. After that time 1 pound chromate of potash and $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of a solution of rosain in hydrochloric acid are added to the bath, which is now kept gently boiling. By the addition of turmeric various shades may be obtained. Logwood will darken them, 6 pounds of logwood and 10 pounds of tumeric being recommended for 100 pounds wool. The term rosain applies to a waste product obtained in the manufacture of aniline red.

STATISTICS.

THE FRENCH CENSUS.—The following statement of the population of the several departments of France appears in the *Journal Officiel*: Department of Ain, number of population 363,290, Aisne 552,439, Allier 300,812, Alpes (Basses) 139,332, Alpes (Hautes) 118,898, Alpes-Maritimes 199,037, Ardèche 330,277, Ardennes 320,217, Ariège 446,398, Aube 255,687, Aude 235,927, Aveyron 402,474, Belfort (territoire de) 56,781, Bouches-du-Rhône 554,911, Calvados 454,012, Cantal 231,867, Charente 367,520, Charente-Inferieure 465,653, Cher 335,392, Corrèze 302,746, Corse 358,507, Côte-d'Or 374,519, Côtes-du-Nord 622,295, Creuse 274,668, Dordogne 439,111, Doubs 291,251, Drôme 320,417, Eure 377,874, Eure-et-Loir 232,632, Finistère 642,933, Gard 420,131, Garonne (Haute) 479,362, Gers 231,717, Gironde 705,149, Hérault 429,878, Ille-et-Vilaine 599,532, Indre 277,623, Indre-et-Loire 317,027, Isère 575,784, Jura 237,634, Landes 300,528, Loir-et-Cher 268,801, Loire 550,611, Loire (Haute) 398,732, Loire-Inferieure 602,206, Loiret 353,921, Lot 231,404, Lot-et-Garonne 319,239, Lozère 135,190, Maine-et-Loire 518,471, Manche 544,776, Marne 386,157, Mayenne (Haute) 251,196, Mayenne 350,637, Meurthe-et-Moselle 365,137, Meuse 231,725, Morbihan 400,352, Nièvre 339,917, Nord 1,437,764, Oise 396,804, Orne 393,250, Pas-de-Calais 761,153, Puy-de-Dôme 506,463, Pyrénées (Basses) 426,700, Pyrénées (Hautes) 233,153, Pyrénées-Orientales 191,854, Rhône 670,247, Saône (Haute) 303,033, Saône-et-Loire 398,344, Sarthe 446,603, Savoie 267,953, Savoie (Haute) 273,027, Seine 2,220,000, Seine-Inferieure 793,022, Seine-et-Marne 341,430, Seine-et-Oise 580,180, Sévres (Deux) 331,243, Somme 557,015, Tarn 352,718, Tarn-et-Garonne 221,610, Var 238,757, Vaucluse 263,451, Vendée 401,446, Vienne 320,593, Vienne (Haute) 322,447, Vosges 332,988, Yonne 363,606—total, 36,102,821.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE King and Queen of Portugal are the god-parents of the royal infant of Spain.

SNAILS IN PARIS.—The annual product of the sale of snails as an article of food in Paris is estimated at upwards of 12,000 frames.

PORTRAIT OF WEBER.—An authentic portrait of Weber, by the academician Hornemann, has just been discovered at Copenhagen.

NEW OPERAS IN ITALY.—Fifty-one new operas were produced in Italy in 1872. Out of these forty-nine were failures.

The Emperor William has notified the Emperor Francis-Joseph of his intention to visit the International Exhibition at Vienna in the early part of July.

THE BOSTON FIRE.—The poet Longfellow is reported to have sustained a heavy loss by the Boston fire, owing to the depreciation of Boston fire insurance stock, of which he was a large holder.

THE ORANGE AND LEMON TRADE.—For the last three years there has been a great increase in the orange and lemon trade. The value as declared imported in 1870 was 649,056*l.*; in 1871, 1,050,115*l.*; and last year as much as 1,154,417*l.*

VENETIAN SCHOOL OF ART.—At Venice steps are being taken for founding an art school wherein pupils dedicating themselves to art may receive a special education under the direction of Signor G. Stella.

CONTENTS.

	Page		Page
THE FOOT TICKLER	361	HOUSEHOLD TREASURES	383
DYEING AND COLOURING	364	STATISTICS	383
NATURAL FLOWERS	364	MISCELLANEOUS	383
SCIENCE	364		
TO CYNTHIA	364		
PROPERTIES AND USES	364		
OF KISSERITE	364		
THE GOLDEN LURE	365		
WARNED BY THE FLA-			
NETS	367		
THE YOUNG LOCK-			
SMITH	368		
SECOND SIGHT	370		
RED HELM	370		
MAURICE DURANT	373		
THE FORTUNES OF			
BRAMBLETHORPE	375		
A CRUEL BLUNDER	379		
GLIMPSES OF SOCIETY	382		
FACETIE	383		
MEMORIES	383		
GEMS	383		

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

NELLIE.—The descriptions are certainly disposed to convey their own meaning. Correspondence is the usual course.

HILDA FLOYD.—If you still love him you might try for a reconciliation. We cannot say more, as we are wholly ignorant of the particulars, and a good deal depends upon his present position and surroundings.

H. S. G.—From a circular published by the government of the Canton Ticino, and addressed to the other Swiss cantons, it appears that the number of poor travellers who received assistance at the hospice of the St. Gotthard between the 1st of October, 1871, and 3rd of September, 1872, was 8,160. These persons received 24,635 rations of food and such articles of clothing as were required. The total expenditure amounted to 9,974-50frs., the receipts amounting to 9,870-40frs., showing a deficit of 104-10frs. As this hospice has no funds of its own the means of relieving poor travellers is to a certain extent restricted, and it depends chiefly on a small grant from the Canton Ticino and private contributors.

BRIGHT EYES.—To make Charlotte Russe take three eggs, one pint of milk, set it on the fire till it thickens, and let it cool; boil one ounce of Russia isinglass in one pint of water till it is a thick jelly; cool and mix with the custard; add four tablespoonfuls of white sugar, and the grated rind and juice of a lemon; whip up half a pint of sweet cream, adding sugar to taste, and mix with the custard. Bake a nice sponge cake in a round tin basin, as large as your dish for the table is to be; take off the top of the cake and remove about half the inside, leaving a nice wall all around, and fill in the custard, after putting your cake in the dish you intend to send it to the table in, and cover with the top piece; beat up to a light froth the whites of two eggs and four tablespoonfuls of white sugar, and spread over the top. Put it in a cool place till wanted, on ice if convenient, and you will have a nice company dish.

DAISY.—To make yeast boil two handfuls of hops, tied in a small bag, in six quarts of water; slice thin six large potatoes, and boil them with the hops; when they are soft skim them out and mash perfectly fine; add to them one pint and a half of wheat flour stirred to a smooth batter with cold water; turn over the whole the boiling hot liquor, first taking out the bag and squeezing it dry; then hang it aside to use another time, for it will make two batches of yeast. Stir into this mixture two tablespoonfuls of sugar, one of ginger and one of salt. When milk-warm, add a teaspoonful of yeast, set in a warm place to rise, and it will be ready to put into a jug by the next morning. Keep in a cool cellar or ice-house, and it will last good for six weeks or more. Always shake the jug before using any of its contents. A teaspoonful of this yeast will make three loaves of bread and a pan of rolls.

ANTIQUARY.—According to tradition the Fenians were a national militia, established in Ireland by Fin, Fingal, or Fionn, the son-in-law of King Cormac (213-253). Each member of the band swore never to receive a portion with a wife (perhaps the coin went into the royal exchequer), but to choose her for her good manners; never to refuse, never to offer violence to any woman; never to virtue to relieve the poor to the utmost of his power; and never to see before nine champions. Other authorities regard the ancient Fenians as a distinct Celtic race, who migrated at an early period into Ireland, while others, again, conjecture that the word is a corruption of "Phoenicians." The Phoenicians were not Celts, but doubtless they, the great traders of antiquity, visited Ireland among other countries. Sir Walter Scott quoting a Celtic poem speaks of the "bare-armed Fenians." The name has since been adopted by an Irish faction whose express design is the dismemberment of the empire and the extinction of England.

S. W. F.—Chillblains are caused by a too sudden change from cold to warmth, as in holding a foot almost benumbed with cold too close to the fire; the skin swells and is more or less discoloured; they sometimes get well of themselves, but often return with the approach of cold weather, accompanied by a very unpleasant itching. As they are caused by cold, the best preventive is to keep the feet always comfortably warm, well protected with thick woollen stockings. Chillblains are broken or unbroken. If broken, wash the parts, night and morning, with half an ounce of blue vitriol dissolved in half a pint of water; keep it in a bottle and use thus: a teaspoonful night and morning and let it dry in; then when the skin is dry, rub into it with the finger, patiently, any kind of ointment or pain killer, or glycerine or hog's lard; this keeps the skin soft and moist and cool. Meanwhile avoid approaching the fire suddenly when the affected

parts are cold. In moderate cases bathing the parts well in cold water two or three times a day, with patient rubbing in of ointment afterwards, is sufficient. If the blain is unbroken apply the following ointment, night and morning: melt one ounce each of rosin and beeswax in three ounces of sweet oil, and when thoroughly melted and stirred up stir in half an ounce of calomine, a preparation of lead which can be had at a drug store. Another excellent preparation for chillblains and chaps is one ounce of colloidion, half an ounce of Venice turpentine and two drams of castor oil; apply externally twice a day, and let it dry in.

F. J. B.—Frost bite is the result of blood becoming so cold as not to circulate, and mortification and the death of the part take place. When a limb on any part of the body is frozen it loses all sensibility and the skin becomes white; as soon as this is noticed rub it gently with snow; the next best is ice water, for that is slightly warmer than the frozen part and thus changes the temperature by very slow degrees; keep it in cold water until the feeling returns and for two or three minutes later, then add a little warm water and in two or three minutes a little more, rubbing the part gently with the hand so as to promote the circulation. If a person seems to be nearly frozen to death, remove all the clothing and cover the whole person, excepting the mouth and nose, in snow; if this cannot be had, use ice water, containing lumps of ice; after remaining a few moments, long enough to have some sensibility, take out the body and wipe it with cloths dipped in cold water until the muscles begin to relax, then remove to a cold bed, cover the body over and with the warm hands under the cover patiently rub the whole surface, for hours if necessary; two or three persons might be rubbing at the same time, in order to get up a circulation. If signs of life appear, give an injection of camphor water and put a few drops of spirits of camphor on the tongue. As soon as the person can notice things, give a teaspoonful of strong tea or coffee, and after a while give half a cup hot, at a time; not only parents, but all young persons ought to know these things. Two winters ago a young gentleman advised a young lady, who was returning from skating with feet benumbed with cold, to put them in warm water as soon as she reached home; she did so to one foot, which had to be taken off.

WOMAN'S LOVE.

A woman's love is like the stream
Increased in winter's ice and snow,
Which by the sun's warm vernal beam
Is made impetuously to flow.

Her love is like a stalk of rose,
Which in cold winter seems as dead;
Yet with the summer's breath it blows,
And then sweet flowers crown its head.

Her love is like the evening star;
Though long on earth in vain it gleam,
Yet waiting in its cold world afar,
Till loving eyes observe its beam.

Her love is like the nightingale,
Which in its cage, though wounded, sings;
Its heart and soul breathe in its wail
When it laments imprisoned wings.

W. B.

ANNIE, a servant, eighteen, good looking, medium height, good tempered, and fond of children, would like a careful young man.

GANT, a respectable tradesman's son, tall, and dark, would like to correspond with a handsome young lady, tall, and about eighteen; an orphan preferred.

ALFIE, tall, large brown eyes, respectfully connected, and in a good business. Respondent must be tall, pretty, and about eighteen.

ALICE, seventeen, dark olive complexion, little colour, large dreamy eyes, very dark-brown hair, good figure, and very fond of singing.

JOHN MCC., twenty-four, very faithful, loving, and respectfully connected. Respondent must be a Protestant, good looking, domesticated, affectionate, educated, and must reside in Dublin.

HILDA P., twenty-two, medium height, dark-brown hair, hazel eyes, beautiful complexion, in a good position, and accomplished, would like to correspond with a fair young gentleman about her own age.

S. A. W., a domestic servant, nineteen, pretty, well educated, and fond of children. Respondent must be able to keep a wife and fond of home comforts; a Protestant preferred.

CARRIE, twenty, dark-blue eyes, brown hair, of a loving disposition, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, dark, respectfully connected, and between twenty-five and thirty.

J. J., seaman in the Royal Navy, 5ft. 8in., dark, handsome, and of a loving disposition. Respondent must be twenty-two, medium height, dark, and fond of home and children.

A. V. C., seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty-one, fair blue eyes, and handsome, wishes to correspond with a young lady about eighteen, tall, fair, loving and fond of home.

SARAH, nineteen, tall, dark, loving, domesticated, and well educated. Respondent must be about twenty-five, tall, handsome, fair complexion, affectionate, and of a loving disposition; a lawyer preferred.

EDITH, eighteen, affectionate, and would make a good wife to a loving husband. Respondent must be about twenty-three, fair, handsome, fond of home, and possess a little business of his own.

W. S., twenty-three, 5ft. 8in., fair complexion, handsome, and loving. Respondent must be about twenty-two, pretty, well educated, affectionate, and very fond of singing.

STEPHEN H., twenty-four, tall, dark complexion, black hair, blue eyes, considered handsome, and a seaman in the Royal Navy. Respondent must be about nineteen, tall, dark, handsome, of a loving disposition, and fond of home.

TOM B., twenty-three, 5ft. 3in., dark complexion, blue eyes, of a loving and affectionate disposition, and a seaman in the Royal Navy. Respondent must be about

twenty, good looking, amiable, able to sing, and fond of home and children.

GIRAY Q., seventeen, black hair, blue eyes, loving and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, dark, fond of home, affectionate, and loving; a seaman in the Royal Navy preferred.

LENA S., twenty-two, tall, fair, of a loving disposition; and domesticated. Respondent must be about twenty-three, tall, fair complexion and of a loving nature; a tradesman preferred.

DICK W., twenty-one, light hair, loving, and would make a good husband. Respondent must be about nineteen, handsome, domesticated, affectionate, and fond of home comforts.

F. O. G., twenty-five, stout, dark hair and eyes, of a loving disposition. Respondent must be about twenty-eight, tall, fair, handsome, amiable, and fond of home and children.

EMILIE Z., nineteen, hazel eyes, dark hair, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must be dark, good looking, tall, loving, steady, respectable, and about twenty-three; a carpenter preferred.

M. W., twenty-three, tall, fair complexion, and a merchant. Respondent must be about nineteen, loving, domesticated, accomplished, able to keep a home tidy, and fond of music.

FANNY S., seventeen, medium height, fair, and considered pretty, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-three, handsome, noble, loving, and able to make home comfortable; a tradesman preferred.

FRANK A., twenty-five, handsome, and loving, would like to correspond with a young lady who is handsome, able to make a home comfortable, fond of home and children, and about his own age.

BELLA, twenty-four, tall, considered handsome, well educated, and fond of home and children. Respondent must be tall, handsome, loving, fond of home, and about her own age.

DAISY, twenty-one, tall, dark, would make a loving and affectionate wife. Respondent must be about twenty-four, tall, dark, handsome, affectionate, and fond of home and children; a miller preferred.

F. W., twenty-five, tall, dark-brown hair, handsome, and of an affectionate disposition, wishes to correspond with a young lady about twenty, pretty, loving, domesticated, and fond of home.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

ERMININE is responded to by—"A Widower," thirty-eight, in the musical profession, no children, and of respectable family.

H. A. P. by—"Happy Tom."

GIPSY by—"T. J. M. L.," twenty-one, 5ft. 10in., dark, affectionate, and a commercial traveller.

RICHARD M. by—"H. G.," affectionate, and would make a good wife.

ANNE by—"William R.," twenty-five, in a good situation, and fond of home.

SAMSO by—"Lette," twenty-four, rather dark, tall, and thoroughly domesticated.

JAMES Z. S. by—"E. C.," twenty-nine, medium height, a domestic servant.

ROSEBUD by—"J. H.," twenty-two, dark hair, pretty, and in a good situation.

W. W. W. by—"Lily," eighteen, tall, fair, good tempered, and accomplished.

F. Mac by—"Marian," twenty-four, tall, dark, handsome, and affectionate.

JACK M. by—"E. T.," twenty-two, handsome, medium height.

CLARA F. by—"Liverpool," twenty-four, 5ft. 10in., fair, loving, affectionate, and a mechanic.

JERRY W. by—"Phoebe," twenty-four, tall, fair, loving, domesticated, fond of home and children, and would make a good wife.

LOVELY NELLIE by—"R. E. A.," 5ft. 8in., tall, dark, good looking, of a loving disposition, a tailor, and I could keep a wife comfortably.

BEA by—"Daisy," twenty-two, tall, fair hair, dark eyes, affectionate, and is sure she would make a loving wife.

A WELSH GIRL by—"Cadwallon," twenty-one, tall, fair, considered handsome, affectionate, and able to keep a wife respectably.

LOVELY JACK by—"Clara F.," twenty-three, fond of music, respectable, very steady, and fond of home and children.

JACK MAISEL by—"Ellen," twenty-four, brown hair, hazel eyes, good tempered, domesticated, of a loving disposition, and fond of children.

TOMMY DOB by—"Lilly G.," twenty-three, fair, considered good looking, domesticated, and of a most loving disposition, has been abroad but prefers an Englishman.

CHEERFUL GEORGE and MERRY WILLIAM by—"Nelly," and "Jenny," nineteen, tall, dark, affectionate, and of a lively disposition. "Jenny," nineteen, fair, loving, medium height, affectionate, and fond of home and children.

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